

# The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

Drama by William Shakespeare

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML9-1034

## Is **LOVE** stronger than **HATE**?



**READING 2C** Relate the figurative language of a literary work to its historical and cultural setting.

**4** Explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text.

**5B** Analyze how authors develop complex yet believable characters through a range of literary devices, including character foils.

**7** Explain the role of sarcasm and paradox in literary works.

**RC-9(A)** Reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension.

It sounds like a story ripped from the tabloids. Two teenagers fall in love at a party. Then they learn that their parents hate each other. The teenagers' love is forbidden, so not surprisingly, they cling to each other even more tightly. Murder and suffering ensue, and by the end, a whole town is in mourning. What love can—and cannot—overcome is at the heart of *Romeo and Juliet*, considered by many to be the greatest love story of all time.

**DEBATE** People say that love conquers all. Is this statement true, or is it just a cliché? How powerful *is* love? Discuss this topic in a small group. Talk about instances in which love has brought people together as well as times when hate has driven them apart. Then form two teams and debate the age-old question, Is love stronger than hate?



## LITERARY ANALYSIS: SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

You can probably guess that a **tragedy** isn't going to end with the words "and they all lived happily ever after." Shakespearean tragedies are dramas that end in disaster—most often death—for the main characters. The conflicts in a tragedy are usually set in motion by the main characters' actions, but fate can also play a part in the catastrophic course of events. As you read *Romeo and Juliet*, pay attention to specific characteristics of Shakespearean drama.

- Notice how **soliloquies** and **asides** enhance your understanding of the drama. These conventions allow characters to "think out loud"—often revealing information about their private thoughts.
- Watch for and analyze **allusions**. Once you decode them, they add an extra layer of meaning to certain passages.
- Consider Shakespeare's use of **comic relief** to ease the tension of certain scenes. Think of the comic episodes as brief breaks that allow you to absorb earlier events in the plot and get ready for new developments.
- Pay attention to the rhythm of each line. Shakespeare wrote his plays in **blank verse**, a poetic form that resembles the rhythm of natural speech.

## READING STRATEGY: READING SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Though his plays can sweep you away, Shakespeare's English is sometimes hard for modern readers to understand. These strategies can help:

- Read the synopsis, or summary, of each scene to get an idea of what happens in that part of the play.
- Use the marginal notes to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words, unusual grammatical structures, and allusions.
- Keep track of events to make the plot easier to follow. All the events in *Romeo and Juliet* take place in six days. As you read, use a chart to record plot developments and interactions between characters.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
street brawl					

### Act One

We meet the Montagues and the Capulets, two long-feuding families in the Italian city of Verona. At the beginning of the play, Romeo, a Montague, is in love with Rosaline. Juliet, a Capulet, is asked by her parents to consider marrying Paris. Romeo and Juliet meet at a masked ball and fall in love, each later realizing that the other is from the enemy family.

### Act Two

Forced to meet in secret, Romeo and Juliet declare their love to each other and decide to get married. Romeo visits Friar Laurence, a priest, and asks him to perform the wedding. Aided by Juliet's nurse, Romeo and Juliet meet and marry in secret.

### Act Three

During a street fight, Juliet's cousin Tybalt kills Romeo's friend Mercutio. Romeo loses his temper and kills Tybalt; he then flees, realizing with horror what he has done. Romeo is banished from Verona under pain of death. Juliet grieves the double loss of her cousin and her husband. With the help of Friar Laurence and the nurse, Romeo and Juliet make plans to flee to Mantua, another city. Her parents, not knowing she is already married to Romeo, order her to marry Paris.

### Act Four

A distraught Juliet visits Friar Laurence for help and threatens to kill herself. He gives her a potion that will not kill her but put her into a deathlike sleep for two days, with the plan that Romeo will rescue her from the family tomb when she awakens. Friar Laurence sends a letter to Romeo in Mantua, describing this plan. Juliet takes the potion. Her family finds her and prepares her burial, believing her dead.

### Act Five

Romeo does not get Friar Laurence's letter before he hears of Juliet's death and believes it is real. Grief stricken, he returns to Verona. He finds Juliet in her deathlike sleep, takes real poison, and dies. Juliet awakens and, finding Romeo dead, kills herself with his dagger. When the families realize what has happened, Lord Capulet and Lord Montague agree to end their feud.

THE TRAGEDY OF  
*Romeo & Juliet*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**GO BEHIND  
THE CURTAIN**

**One Play, Many Productions**

The images at the top of page 1037 capture five different interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet*. Though the productions were staged at different times in different countries, each director had the same goal: to thrill audiences with Shakespeare's timeless tale of two reckless, lovesick teenagers. As you read the play, you will discover many more images from a variety of productions. You'll also encounter **Behind the Curtain** feature pages that will help you explore the stagecraft used to create moving theatrical productions of this famous play.

**TIME**

The 14th century

**CAST**

**THE MONTAGUES**

**Lord Montague** (mŏn'tə-gyŏŏ')

**Lady Montague**

**Romeo**, son of Montague

**Benvolio** (bĕn-vŏ'lĕ-ŏ), nephew of Montague and friend of Romeo

**Balthasar** (bäl'thĕ-sär'), servant to Romeo

**Abram**, servant to Montague

**THE CAPULETS**

**Lord Capulet** (kăp'yŏŏ-lĕt')

**Lady Capulet**

**Juliet**, daughter of Capulet

**Tybalt** (tĭb'ĕlt), nephew of Lady Capulet

**Nurse** to Juliet

**Peter**, servant to Juliet's nurse

**Sampson**, servant to Capulet

**Gregory**, servant to Capulet

**An Old Man** of the Capulet family

**PLACE**

Verona (və-rŏ'nə) and Mantua (măn'chŏŏ-ə) in northern Italy

**OTHERS**

**Prince Escalus** (ĕs'kə-ləs), ruler of Verona

**Mercutio** (mĕr-kyŏŏ'shĕ-ŏ), kinsman of the prince and friend of Romeo

**Friar Laurence**, a Franciscan priest

**Friar John**, another Franciscan priest

**Count Paris**, a young nobleman, kinsman of the prince

**Apothecary** (ə-pŏth'ĭ-kĕr'ĕ)

**Page** to Paris

**Chief Watchman**

**Three Musicians**

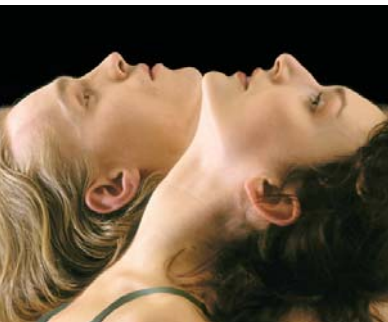
**An Officer**

**Chorus**

**Citizens of Verona**, **Gentlemen** and **Gentlewomen** of both houses,

**Maskers**, **Torchbearers**, **Pages**, **Guards**, **Watchmen**, **Servants**, and **Attendants**





## Prologue

*The Chorus is one actor who serves as a narrator. He enters from the back of the stage to introduce and explain the theme of the play. His job is to “hook” the audience’s interest by telling them just enough to quiet them down and make them eager for more. In this prologue, or preview, the narrator explains that the play will be about a feud between two families (the Capulets and the Montagues). In addition, the narrator says that the feud will end in tragedy. As you read the prologue, determine what the tragedy will be.*

[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-crossed lovers take their life,  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Doth with their death bury their parents’ strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-marked 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.]

**3–4 ancient . . . unclean:** A new outbreak of fighting (**mutiny**) between families has caused the citizens of Verona to have one another’s blood on their hands.

**6 star-crossed:** doomed. The position of the stars when the lovers were born was not favorable. In Shakespeare’s day, people took astrology very seriously.

**7 misadventured:** unlucky.

**11 but:** except for; **naught:** nothing.

**12 the two hours’ . . . stage:** what will be shown on the stage in the next two hours.

**14 what . . . mend:** The play will fill in the details not mentioned in the prologue.

# Act One

## SCENE 1 *A public square in Verona.*

*As the scene opens, two young Capulet servants swagger across the stage, joking and bragging. When they happen to meet servants from the rival house of Montague, a quarrel begins that grows into an ugly street fight. Finally the ruler of Verona, Prince Escalus, appears. He is angry about the violence in his city and warns that the next offenders will receive the death penalty. The crowd fades away, and the stage is set for the entrance of Romeo, heir of the Montague family. Romeo, infatuated and miserable, can talk of nothing but his love for Rosaline and her cruelty in refusing to love him back.*

[Enter Sampson and Gregory, servants of the house of Capulet, armed with swords and bucklers (shields).]

**Sampson.** Gregory, on my word, we'll not carry coals.

**Gregory.** No, for then we should be colliers.

**Sampson.** I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

**Gregory.** Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.

5 **Sampson.** I strike quickly, being moved.

**Gregory.** But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

**Sampson.** A dog of that house of Montague moves me.

**Gregory.** To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand.  
Therefore, if thou art moved, thou runnest away.

10 **Sampson.** A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will  
take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

**Gregory.** That shows thee a weak slave, for the weakest goes to  
the wall.

**Sampson.** 'Tis true; and therefore women, being the weaker  
15 vessels, are ever thrust to the wall. Therefore push I will  
Montague's men from the wall and thrust his maids to the wall.

**Gregory.** The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

**Sampson.** 'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have  
fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids: I will cut  
20 off their heads.

**Gregory.** The heads of the maids?

**Sampson.** Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads.  
Take it in what sense thou wilt.

**Gregory.** They must take it in sense that feel it.

**1–2 we'll not carry coals:** we won't stand to be insulted. **Colliers**, those involved in the dirty work of hauling coal, were often the butt of jokes.

**3–4 in choler:** angry; **collar:** a hangman's noose.

**11 take the wall:** walk nearest to the wall. People of higher rank had the privilege of walking closer to the wall, to avoid any water or garbage in the street. *What claim is Sampson making about himself and anyone from the rival house of Montague?*

**14–24** Sampson's tough talk includes boasts about his ability to overpower women.

Romeo and Juliet in the Anželika  
Cholina Dance Theatre's  
2003 production





- 25 **Sampson.** Me they shall feel while I am able to stand;  
and 'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.
- Gregory.** 'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst  
been poor-John. Draw thy tool! Here comes two of the house  
of Montagues.
- [*Enter Abram and Balthasar, servants to the Montagues.*]
- 30 **Sampson.** My naked weapon is out. Quarrel! I will back thee.
- Gregory.** How? turn thy back and run?
- Sampson.** Fear me not.
- Gregory.** No, marry. I fear thee!
- Sampson.** Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.
- 35 **Gregory.** I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they list.
- Sampson.** Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them;  
which is disgrace to them, if they bear it.
- Abram.** Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
- Sampson.** I do bite my thumb, sir.
- 40 **Abram.** Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
- Sampson** [*aside to Gregory*]. Is the law of our side if I say ay?
- Gregory** [*aside to Sampson*]. No.
- Sampson.** No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite  
my thumb, sir. **A**
- 45 **Gregory.** Do you quarrel, sir?
- Abram.** Quarrel, sir? No, sir.
- Sampson.** But if you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man  
as you.
- Abram.** No better.
- 50 **Sampson.** Well, sir.
- [*Enter Benvolio, nephew of Montague and first cousin of Romeo.*]
- Gregory** [*aside to Sampson*]. Say “better.” Here comes one of my  
master’s kinsmen.
- Sampson.** Yes, better, sir.
- Abram.** You lie.
- 55 **Sampson.** Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy  
swashing blow. **B**
- [*They fight.*]
- Benvolio.** Part, fools! [*beats down their swords*]  
Put up your swords. You know not what you do.

**28 poor-John:** a salted fish, considered fit only for poor people to eat.

**33 marry:** a short form of “by the Virgin Mary” and so a mild exclamation.

**34–44** Gregory and Sampson decide to pick a fight by insulting the Montague servants with a rude gesture (**bite my thumb**).



TEKS 7

**A SARCASM**

**Sarcasm** is an ironic remark often used to convey an insult. In this instance, Sampson is being sarcastic by telling Abram and Balthasar he is not quarreling, or starting a fight, when he is clearly doing just that. Does including sarcasm in this scene make the dialogue more realistic? Explain.

**51–52** Gregory notices that Tybalt, a Capulet, is arriving. *Why do you think Gregory and Sampson behave more aggressively as soon as they realize that Tybalt is approaching?*

**B ASIDE**

Contrast what the servants say openly in lines 35–56 with what they say in **asides**, or whispers to each other. What does this contrast reveal about Sampson and Gregory?

[Enter Tybalt, hot-headed nephew of Lady Capulet and first cousin of Juliet.]

**Tybalt.** What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?

60 Turn thee, Benvolio! look upon thy death.

**Benvolio.** I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,  
Or manage it to part these men with me.

**Tybalt.** What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word  
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

65 Have at thee, coward!

[*They fight.*]

[Enter several of both houses, who join the fray; then enter Citizens and Peace Officers, with clubs.]

**Officer.** Clubs, bills, and partisans! Strike! beat them down!

**Citizens.** Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

[Enter old Capulet and Lady Capulet.]

**Capulet.** What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!

**Lady Capulet.** A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?

70 **Capulet.** My sword, I say! Old Montague is come  
And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

[Enter old Montague and Lady Montague.]

**Montague.** Thou villain Capulet!—Hold me not, let me go.

**Lady Montague.** Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

[Enter Prince Escalus, with attendants. At first no one hears him.]

**Prince.** Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,

75 Profaners of this neighbor-stained steel—  
Will they not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts,  
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage  
With purple fountains issuing from your veins!  
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands

80 Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground  
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.

Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word  
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets

85 And made Verona's ancient citizens  
Cast by their grave beseeching ornaments  
To wield old partisans, in hands as old,  
Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate.

If ever you disturb our streets again,

90 Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

**59–65** Tybalt does not understand that Benvolio is trying to stop the fight. He challenges Benvolio.

**59 heartless hinds:** cowardly servants.

**63 drawn:** with your sword out.

**65 Have at thee:** Defend yourself.

**66 bills, and partisans:** spears.

**69 A crutch . . . sword:** You need a crutch more than a sword.

**74–81** The prince is furious about the street fighting caused by the feud. He orders the men to drop their weapons and pay attention.

**77 pernicious:** destructive.

**82–90 Three . . . peace:** The prince holds Capulet and Montague responsible for three recent street fights, each probably started by an offhand remark or insult (**airy word**). He warns that they will be put to death if any more fights occur.



For this time all the rest depart away.  
You, Capulet, shall go along with me;  
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,  
To know our farther pleasure in this case,  
95 To old Freetown, our common judgment place.  
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.  
[*Exeunt all but Montague, Lady Montague, and Benvolio.*]

**Montague.** Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad?  
Speak, nephew, were you by when it began?

**Benvolio.** Here were the servants of your adversary  
100 And yours, close fighting ere I did approach.  
I drew to part them. In the instant came  
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared;  
Which, as he breathed defiance to my ears,  
He swung about his head and cut the winds,  
105 Who, nothing hurt withal, hissed him in scorn. **C**  
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,  
Came more and more, and fought on part and part,  
Till the Prince came, who parted either part.

**Lady Montague.** O, where is Romeo? Saw you him today?  
110 Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

**Benvolio.** Madam, an hour before the worshiped sun  
Peered forth the golden window of the East,  
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad,  
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore  
115 That westward rooteth from the city's side,  
So early walking did I see your son.  
Towards him I made, but he was ware of me  
And stole into the covert of the wood.  
I—measuring his affections by my own,  
120 Which then most sought where most might not be found,  
Being one too many by my weary self—  
Pursued my humor, not pursuing his,  
And gladly shunned who gladly fled from me.

**Montague.** Many a morning hath he there been seen,  
125 With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,  
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs;  
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun  
Should in the farthest East begin to draw  
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,  
130 Away from light steals home my heavy son  
And private in his chamber pens himself,  
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,

**exeunt:** the plural form of *exit*, indicating that more than one person is leaving the stage.

**97 Who . . . abroad:** Who reopened this old argument?

**99 adversary:** enemy.

**100 ere:** before.

### **C CHARACTER**

According to Benvolio, what kind of person is Tybalt? **Predict** how Tybalt might act if he runs into Benvolio—or any other Montague—again.

**107 on part and part:** some on one side, some on the other.

**110 fray:** fight.

**113 drave:** drove.

**115 rooteth:** grows.

**117–123 made:** moved; **covert:** covering. Romeo saw Benvolio coming and hid in the woods. Since Benvolio himself was seeking solitude, he decided to respect Romeo's privacy and did not go after him. *What does this action tell you about Benvolio?*

**124–135** Romeo has been seen wandering through the woods at night, crying. At dawn he returns home and locks himself in his darkened room. Montague feels that this behavior is a bad sign and that his son needs guidance.

**129 Aurora's bed:** Aurora was the goddess of the dawn.

And makes himself an artificial night.  
Black and portentous must this humor prove  
135 Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

**Benvolio.** My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

**Montague.** I neither know it nor can learn of him.

**Benvolio.** Have you importuned him by any means?

**Montague.** Both by myself and many other friends;  
140 But he, his own affections' counselor,  
Is to himself—I will not say how true—  
But to himself so secret and so close,  
So far from sounding and discovery,  
As is the bud bit with an envious worm  
145 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air  
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.  
Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,  
We would as willingly give cure as know.

[*Enter Romeo lost in thought.*]

**Benvolio.** See, where he comes. So please you step aside,  
150 I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.

**Montague.** I would thou wert so happy by thy stay  
To hear true shrift. Come, madam, let's away.

[*Exeunt Montague and Lady.*]

**Benvolio.** Good morrow, cousin.

**Romeo.** Is the day so young?

**Benvolio.** But new struck nine.

**Romeo.** Ay me! sad hours seem long.  
155 Was that my father that went hence so fast?

**Benvolio.** It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

**Romeo.** Not having that which having makes them short.

**Benvolio.** In love?

**Romeo.** Out—

160 **Benvolio.** Of love?

**Romeo.** Out of her favor where I am in love.

**Benvolio.** Alas that love, so gentle in his view,  
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!

**Romeo.** Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,  
165 Should without eyes see pathways to his will!  
Where shall we dine?—O me! What fray was here?—  
Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

**134 portentous:** indicating evil to come; threatening.

**138 importuned:** asked in an urgent way.

**140 his own affections' counselor:** Romeo keeps to himself.

**143–148 so far from . . . know:** Finding out what Romeo is thinking is almost impossible. Montague compares his son to a young bud destroyed by the bite of a worm before it has a chance to open its leaves. Montague wants to find out what is bothering Romeo so he can help him.

**152 shrift:** confession.

**153 cousin:** any relative or close friend. The informal version is *coz*.

**157–163** *Why has Romeo been so depressed?*

**162–164 love:** references to Cupid, the god of love, typically pictured as a blind boy with wings and a bow and arrow. Anyone hit by one of his arrows falls in love instantly. Cupid looks sweet and gentle, but in reality he can be a harsh master.

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.  
Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!  
170 O anything, of nothing first create!  
O heavy lightness! serious vanity!  
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!  
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!  
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!  
175 This love feel I, that feel no love in this.  
Dost thou not laugh?

**Benvolio.** No, coz, I rather weep.

**Romeo.** Good heart, at what?

**Benvolio.** At thy good heart's oppression.

**Romeo.** Why, such is love's transgression.  
Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast,  
180 Which thou wilt propagate, to have it prestat  
With more of thine. This love that thou hast shown  
Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.  
Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs;  
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;  
185 Being vexed, a sea nourished with lovers' tears.  
What is it else? A madness most discreet,  
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.  
Farewell, my coz.

**Benvolio.** Soft! I will go along.  
An if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

190 **Romeo.** Tut! I have lost myself; I am not here:  
This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

**Benvolio.** Tell me in sadness, who is that you love?

**Romeo.** What, shall I groan and tell thee?

**Benvolio.** Groan? Why, no;  
But sadly tell me who.

195 **Romeo.** Bid a sick man in sadness make his will.  
Ah, word ill urged to one that is so ill!  
In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

**Benvolio.** I aimed so near when I supposed you loved.

**Romeo.** A right good markman! And she's fair I love.

200 **Benvolio.** A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

**Romeo.** Well, in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit  
With Cupid's arrow. She hath Dian's wit,  
And, in strong proof of chastity well armed,  
From Love's weak childish bow she lives unharmed.

**168–176** Romeo, confused and upset, tries to describe his feelings about love. He uses phrases like “loving hate” and other contradictory expressions.

**176–182** Benvolio expresses his sympathy for Romeo. Romeo replies that this is one more problem caused by love. He now feels worse than before because he must carry the weight of Benvolio's sympathy along with his own grief.

**184 purged:** cleansed (of the smoke).

**185 vexed:** troubled.

**187 gall:** something causing bitterness or hate.

**188 Soft:** Wait a minute.

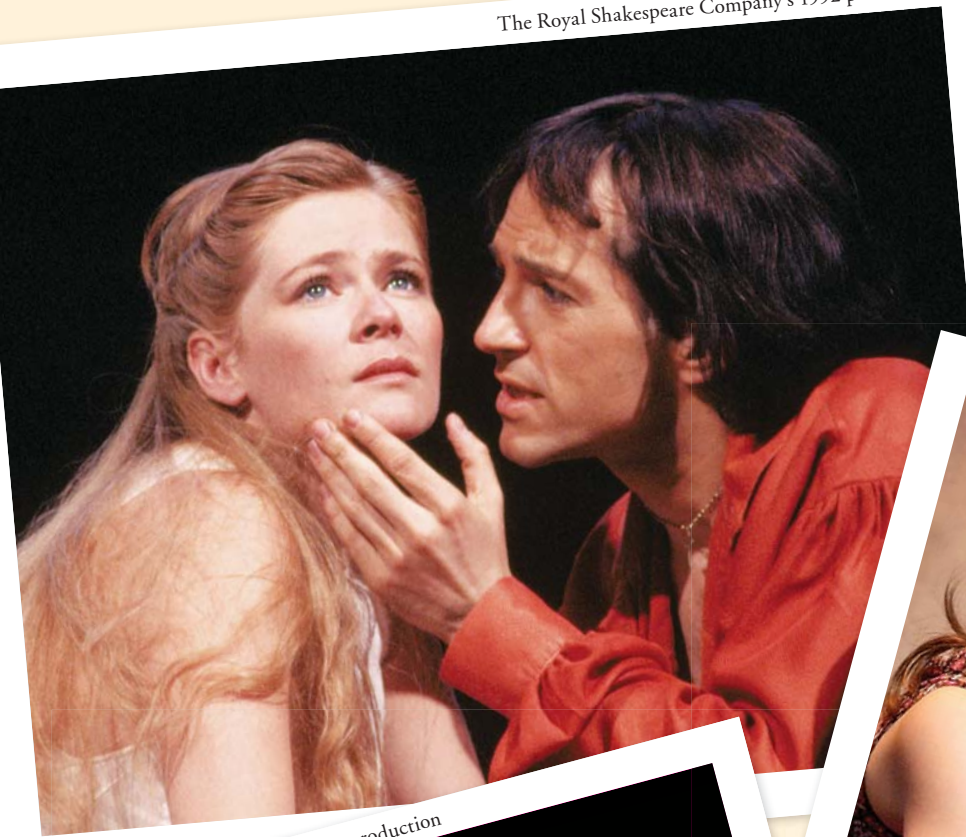
**192 sadness:** seriousness.

**201–204 She'll . . . unharmed:** The girl isn't interested in falling in love. She is like Diana, the goddess of chastity, who fended off Cupid's arrows.



## Behind the Curtain

The Royal Shakespeare Company's 1992 production



A 2004 coproduction of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Second City



The Cottesloe Theatre's 2000 production



## Casting

Even plays as timeless as Shakespearean dramas need powerful performances to bring them to life. Examine these photographs, and think about the choices the directors made when **casting**, or selecting, the pairs of actors for the roles of Juliet and Romeo. If you were in charge of casting a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, which pair would you choose, and why?

205 She will not stay the siege of loving terms,  
Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,  
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold.  
O, she is rich in beauty; only poor  
That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

210 **Benvolio.** Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

**Romeo.** She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste;  
For beauty, starved with her severity,  
Cuts beauty off from all posterity.  
She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,

215 To merit bliss by making me despair.  
She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow  
Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

**Benvolio.** Be ruled by me: forget to think of her.

**Romeo.** O, teach me how I should forget to think!

220 **Benvolio.** By giving liberty unto thine eyes:  
Examine other beauties.

**Romeo.** 'Tis the way  
To call hers (exquisite) in question more.  
These happy masks that kiss fair ladies' brows,  
Being black, puts us in mind they hide the fair.

225 He that is stricken blind cannot forget  
The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.  
Show me a mistress that is passing fair,  
What doth her beauty serve but as a note  
Where I may read who passed that passing fair?

230 Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.

**Benvolio.** I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

[*Exeunt.*]

**205–207 She will not . . . saint-seducing gold:** She is not swayed by Romeo's declaration of love, his adoring looks, or his wealth.

**212–213 For beauty . . . posterity:** By denying herself love and marriage, she wastes her beauty, which will not be passed on to future generations.

**215–216 to merit . . . despair:** The girl will reach heaven (**bliss**) by being so virtuous, which causes Romeo to feel hopelessness or despair; **forsworn to:** sworn not to.

**220–221** *What is Benvolio's advice?*

**221–222 'Tis . . . more:** That would only make me appreciate my own love's beauty more.

**223** Masks were worn by Elizabethan women to protect their complexions from the sun.

**227–229 Show me . . . that passing fair:** A woman who is exceedingly (**passing**) beautiful will only remind me of my love, who is even prettier.

**231 I'll pay . . . debt:** I'll convince you you're wrong, or die trying.

## SCENE 2 *A street near the Capulet house.*

*This scene opens with Count Paris, a young nobleman, asking Capulet for permission to marry his daughter, Juliet. Capulet says that Juliet is too young but gives Paris permission to court her and try to win her heart. He also invites Paris to a party he is giving that night.*

*Romeo finds out about the party and discovers that Rosaline, the girl who rejected him, will be present. Benvolio urges Romeo to go to the party to see how Rosaline compares with the other women.*

[*Enter Capulet with Paris, a kinsman of the Prince, and Servant.*]

**Capulet.** But Montague is bound as well as I,  
In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think,  
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

**1 bound:** obligated.

**Paris.** Of honorable reckoning are you both,  
5 And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.  
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?  
**Capulet.** But saying o'er what I have said before:  
My child is yet a stranger in the world,  
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years;  
10 Let two more summers wither in their pride  
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

**Paris.** Younger than she are happy mothers made.

**Capulet.** And too soon marred are those so early made.  
The earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she;  
15 She is the hopeful lady of my earth.  
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart;  
My will to her consent is but a part.  
An she agree, within her scope of choice  
Lies my consent and fair according voice. **D**

20 This night I hold an old accustomed feast,  
Whereto I have invited many a guest,  
Such as I love, and you among the store,  
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.  
At my poor house look to behold this night  
25 Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light.  
Such comfort as do lusty young men feel  
When well-appareled April on the heel  
Of limping Winter treads, even such delight  
Among fresh female buds shall you this night  
30 Inherit at my house. Hear all, all see,  
And like her most whose merit most shall be;  
Which, on more view of many, mine, being one,  
May stand in number, though in reck'ning none.  
Come, go with me. [*to Servant, giving him a paper*]

Go, sirrah, trudge about

35 Through fair Verona; find those persons out  
Whose names are written there, and to them say,  
My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

[*Exeunt Capulet and Paris.*]

**Servant.** Find them out whose names are written here! It is  
written that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard and the  
40 tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil and the painter  
with his nets; but I am sent to find those persons whose names  
are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person  
hath here writ. I must to the learned. In good time!

**4 reckoning:** reputation.

**6 what say . . . suit:** Paris is asking for Capulet's response to his proposal to marry Juliet.

**10 let two more summers . . . pride:** let two more years pass.

**14 The earth . . . she:** All my children are dead except Juliet.

**16 woo her:** try to win her heart.

**18–19 An . . . voice:** I will give my approval to the one she chooses.

**20 old accustomed feast:** a traditional or annual party.

**D BLANK VERSE**

Reread lines 16–19 aloud, tapping your foot at each stressed syllable. How many stressed syllables are in each line?

**29–33 among . . . none:** Tonight at the party you will witness the loveliest young girls in Verona, including Juliet. When you see all of them together, your opinion of Juliet may change.

**34 sirrah:** a term used to address a servant.

**38–43** The servant cannot seek out the people on the list because he cannot read. In his remarks he confuses the craftsmen and their tools, tapping a typical source of humor for Elizabethan comic characters.

**43 In good time:** What luck (a reference to the arrival of Romeo and Benvolio, who will be able to help the servant read the list).



[Enter Benvolio and Romeo.]

**Benvolio.** Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning;

45 One pain is lessened by another's anguish;  
Turn giddy, and be holp by backward turning;  
One desperate grief cures with another's languish.  
Take thou some new infection to thy eye,  
And the rank poison of the old will die.

50 **Romeo.** Your plantain leaf is excellent for that.

**Benvolio.** For what, I pray thee?

**Romeo.** For your broken shin.

**Benvolio.** Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

**Romeo.** Not mad, but bound more than a madman is;  
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,

55 Whipped and tormented and—God-den, good fellow.

**Servant.** God gi' go-den. I pray, sir, can you read?

**Romeo.** Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

**Servant.** Perhaps you have learned it without book. But  
I pray, can you read anything you see?

60 **Romeo.** Ay, if I know the letters and the language.

**Servant.** Ye say honestly. Rest you merry!

[Romeo's joking goes over the clown's head. He concludes that  
Romeo cannot read and prepares to seek someone who can.]

**Romeo.** Stay, fellow; I can read. [He reads.]

“Signior Martino and his wife and daughters;  
County Anselmo and his beauteous sisters;

65 The lady widow of Vitruvio;  
Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces;  
Mercutio and his brother Valentine;  
Mine uncle Capulet, his wife, and daughters;  
My fair niece Rosaline and Livia;

70 Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt;  
Lucio and the lively Helena.”

[gives back the paper]

A fair assembly. Whither should they come?

**Servant.** Up.

**Romeo.** Whither?

75 **Servant.** To supper, to our house.

**Romeo.** Whose house?

**Servant.** My master's.

**Romeo.** Indeed I should have asked you that before.

**44–49 Tut, man . . . die:** Romeo and Benvolio are still discussing Romeo's love problems. Benvolio says Romeo should find a new love—that a “new infection” will cure the old one.

**55 god-den:** good evening. Romeo interrupts his lament to talk to the servant.

**56 God gi' go-den:** God give you a good evening.

**69 Rosaline:** This is the woman that Romeo is in love with. Mercutio, a friend of both Romeo and the Capulets, is also invited to the party.

**72 whither:** where.

**Servant.** Now I'll tell you without asking. My master is the great  
80 rich Capulet; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I  
pray come and crush a cup of wine. Rest you merry!

[*Exit.*]

**Benvolio.** At this same ancient feast of Capulet's  
Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou so lovest,  
With all the admired beauties of Verona.  
85 Go thither, and with unattainted eye  
Compare her face with some that I shall show,  
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

**Romeo.** When the devout religion of mine eye  
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;  
90 And these, who, often drowned, could never die,  
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!  
One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sun  
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

**Benvolio.** Tut! you saw her fair, none else being by,  
95 Herself poised with herself in either eye;  
But in that crystal scales let there be weighed  
Your lady's love against some other maid  
That I will show you shining at this feast,  
And she shall scant show well that now shows best.

100 **Romeo.** I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,  
But to rejoice in splendor of mine own.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE 3 *Capulet's house.*

*In this scene, you will meet Juliet, her mother, and her nurse. The nurse, a merry and slightly crude servant, has been in charge of Juliet since her birth. Once she starts talking, she can't stop. Just before the party, Juliet's mother asks if Juliet has thought about getting married. Lady Capulet is matchmaking, trying to convince her daughter that Paris would make a good husband. Juliet responds just as you might if your parents set up a blind date for you—without much enthusiasm.*

[*Enter Lady Capulet and Nurse.*]

**Lady Capulet.** Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

**Nurse.** Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,  
I bade her come. What, lamb! what, ladybird!  
God forbid! Where's this girl? What, Juliet!

[*Enter Juliet.*]

5 **Juliet.** How now? Who calls?

**81 crush a cup of wine:** slang for “drink some wine.”

**85 unattainted:** unbiased; unprejudiced.

**88–91 When . . . liars:** If the love I have for Rosaline, which is like a religion, changes because of such a lie (that others may be more beautiful), let my tears be turned to fire and my eyes be burned.

**94–99 Tut . . . best:** You've seen Rosaline alone; now compare her with some other women. *How does Benvolio think Rosaline will measure up against the other girls?*

**100–101** Romeo agrees to go to the party, but only to see Rosaline.

**3–4 what:** a call like “Hey, where are you?”

**Nurse.** Your mother.

**Juliet.** Madam, I am here. What is your will?

**Lady Capulet.** This is the matter—Nurse, give leave awhile,  
We must talk in secret. Nurse, come back again;

10 I have remembered me, thou'st hear our counsel.  
Thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty age.

**Nurse.** Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

**Lady Capulet.** She's not fourteen.

**Nurse.** I'll lay fourteen of my teeth—  
And yet, to my teen be it spoken, I have but four—

15 She's not fourteen. How long is it now  
To Lammastide?

**Lady Capulet.** A fortnight and odd days.

**8–11 give leave . . . counsel:** Lady Capulet seems flustered or nervous, not sure whether she wants the nurse to stay or leave; **of a pretty age:** of an attractive age, ready for marriage.

**14 teen:** sorrow.

**16 Lammastide:** August 1, a religious feast day. It is two weeks (**a fortnight**) away.



Juliet and her nurse in the 1994 production of the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C.



**Nurse.** Even or odd, of all days in the year,  
 Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.  
 Susan and she (God rest all Christian souls!)  
 20 Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God;  
 She was too good for me. But, as I said,  
 On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen;  
 That shall she, marry; I remember it well.  
 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;  
 25 And she was weaned (I never shall forget it),  
 Of all the days of the year, upon that day.  
 For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,  
 Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall.  
 My lord and you were then at Mantua—  
 30 Nay, I do bear a brain—But, as I said,  
 When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple  
 Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,  
 To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug!  
 Shake, quoth the dovehouse! 'Twas no need, I trow,  
 35 To bid me trudge.  
 And since that time it is eleven years,  
 For then she could stand alone; nay, by the rood,  
 She could have run and waddled all about;  
 For even the day before, she broke her brow;  
 40 And then my husband (God be with his soul!  
 'A was a merry man) took up the child.  
 "Yea," quoth he, "dost thou fall upon thy face?  
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou has more wit,  
 Wilt thou not, Jule?" And, by my holidam,  
 45 The pretty wretch left crying, and said "Ay."  
 To see now how a jest shall come about!  
 I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,  
 I never should forget it. "Wilt thou not, Jule?" quoth he,  
 And, pretty fool, it stinted, and said "Ay." **E**

50 **Lady Capulet.** Enough of this. I pray thee hold thy peace.  
**Nurse.** Yes, madam. Yet I cannot choose but laugh  
 To think it should leave crying and say "Ay."  
 And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow  
 A bump as big as a young cockrel's stone;  
 55 A perilous knock; and it cried bitterly.  
 "Yea," quoth my husband, "fallst upon thy face?  
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age,  
 Wilt thou not, Jule?" It stinted, and said "Ay."

**17–49** The nurse begins to babble about various memories of Juliet's childhood. She talks of her own dead daughter, Susan, who was the same age as Juliet. Susan probably died in infancy, leaving the nurse available to become a wet nurse to (that is, breastfeed) Juliet. She remembers an earthquake that happened on the day she stopped breast-feeding Juliet (**she was weaned**).

**27 laid wormwood to my dug:** applied wormwood, a plant with a bitter taste, to her breast in order to discourage the child from breastfeeding.

**33 tetchy:** touchy; cranky.

**34–35 Shake . . . trudge:** When the dove house shook, I knew enough to leave.

**37 by the rood:** by the cross of Christ (a mild oath).

**39 broke her brow:** cut her forehead.

**42–49 "Yea" . . . "Ay":** To quiet Juliet after her fall, the nurse's husband made a crude joke, asking the baby whether she'd fall the other way (on her back) when she was older. Although at three Juliet didn't understand the question, she stopped crying (**stinted**) and innocently answered "Yes." The nurse finds the story so funny that she can't stop retelling it.

### **E** CHARACTER

So far, how would you describe the nurse? List three **traits** this character exhibits.

**55 perilous:** hazardous; dangerous.

**Juliet.** And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

60 **Nurse.** Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace!  
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed.  
An I might live to see thee married once,  
I have my wish.

**Lady Capulet.** Marry, that “marry” is the very theme  
65 I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,  
How stands your disposition to be married?

**Juliet.** It is an honor that I dream not of.

**Nurse.** An honor? Were not I thine only nurse,  
I would say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.

70 **Lady Capulet.** Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you,  
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,  
Are made already mothers. By my count,  
I was your mother much upon these years  
That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:

75 The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

**Nurse.** A man, young lady! lady, such a man  
As all the world—why he's a man of wax.

**Lady Capulet.** Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

**Nurse.** Nay, he's a flower, in faith—a very flower.

80 **Lady Capulet.** What say you? Can you love the gentleman?

This night you shall behold him at our feast.  
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,  
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;  
Examine every several lineament,

85 And see how one another lends content;  
And what obscured in this fair volume lies  
Find written in the margent of his eyes.  
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,  
To beautify him only lacks a cover.

90 The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride  
For fair without the fair within to hide.  
That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,  
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;  
So shall you share all that he doth possess,

95 By having him making yourself no less.

**Nurse.** No less? Nay, bigger! Women grow by men.

**Lady Capulet.** Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

**Juliet.** I'll look to like, if looking liking move;  
But no more deep will I endart mine eye

**64 Marry . . . “marry”:** two different usages of the same word—the first meaning “by the Virgin Mary” and the second meaning “to wed.”

**73–74 I was . . . maid:** I was your mother at about your age, yet you are still unmarried.

**77 a man of wax:** a man so perfect he could be a wax statue, of the type sculptors once used as models for their works.

**82–89 Read . . . cover:** Lady Capulet uses an extended metaphor that compares Paris to a book that Juliet should read.

**84 every several lineament:** each separate feature (of Paris' face).

**87 margent . . . eyes:** She compares Paris' eyes to the margin of a page, where notes are written to explain the content.

**88–91 This . . . hide:** This beautiful book (Paris) needs only a cover (wife) to become even better. He may be hiding even more wonderful qualities inside.

**96** The nurse can't resist commenting that women get bigger (pregnant) when they marry.

**98 I'll look . . . move:** I'll look at him with the intention of liking him, if simply looking can make me like him.

**99 endart:** look deeply, as if penetrating with a dart.

100 Than your consent gives strength to make it fly. **F**

[Enter a Servingman.]

**Servingman.** Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you called, my young lady asked for, the nurse cursed in the pantry, and everything in extremity. I must hence to wait. I beseech you follow straight.

105 **Lady Capulet.** We follow thee. [Exit Servingman.] Juliet, the County stays.

**Nurse.** Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE 4 *A street near the Capulet house.*

*It is the evening of the Capulet masque, or costume ball. Imagine the guests proceeding through the darkened streets with torches to light the way.*

*Romeo and his friends Mercutio and Benvolio join the procession. Their masks will prevent Romeo's and Benvolio's being recognized as Montagues. Mercutio and Benvolio are in a playful, partying mood, but Romeo is still depressed by his unanswered love for Rosaline. Romeo has also had a dream that warned him of the harmful consequences of this party. He senses trouble.*

[Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, with five or six other Maskers; Torchbearers.]

**Romeo.** What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?  
Or shall we on without apology?

**Benvolio.** The date is out of such prolixity.  
We'll have no Cupid hoodwinked with a scarf,

5 Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,  
Scaring the ladies like a crowkeeper;  
Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke  
After the prompter, for our entrance;  
But let them measure us by what they will,  
10 We'll measure them a measure, and be gone.

**Romeo.** Give me a torch. I am not for this ambling;  
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

**Mercutio.** Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

**Romeo.** Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes  
15 With nimble soles; I have a soul of lead  
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

**Mercutio.** You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings  
And soar with them above a common bound.

**Romeo.** I am too sore enpierced with his shaft  
20 To soar with his light feathers, and so bound

### **F** TRAGEDY

How might Lady Capulet's desire for Juliet to marry Paris lead to **conflict** later in the play? Explain your answer.

**103–104 extremity:** great confusion; **straight:** immediately.

**105 the County stays:** Count Paris is waiting for you.

### **1–10** What, shall this . . . be gone:

Romeo asks whether they should send a messenger announcing their arrival at the party. Benvolio replies that this custom is out of date. He says that they'll dance one dance with the partygoers (**measure them a measure**) and then leave.

**12 heavy:** sad. Romeo makes a joke based on the meanings of *heavy* and *light*.

**14–32** Romeo continues to talk about his sadness, while Mercutio jokingly makes fun of him to try to cheer him up.



I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe.  
Under love's heavy burden do I sink. **G**

**Mercutio.** And, to sink in it, should you burden love—  
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

25 **Romeo.** Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,  
Too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks like thorn.

**Mercutio.** If love be rough with you, be rough with love.  
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.  
Give me a case to put my visage in.

30 A visor for a visor! What care I  
What curious eye doth quote deformities?  
Here are the beetle brows shall blush for me.

**Benvolio.** Come, knock and enter, and no sooner in  
But every man betake him to his legs.

35 **Romeo.** A torch for me! Let wantons light of heart  
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels;  
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase,  
I'll be a candle-holder and look on;  
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.

40 **Mercutio.** Tut, dun's the mouse, the constable's own word!  
If thou art Dun, we'll draw thee from the mire  
Of, save your reverence, love, wherein thou stickst  
Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight, ho!

**Romeo.** Nay, that's not so.

**Mercutio.** I mean, sir, in delay

45 We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.  
Take our good meaning, for our judgment sits  
Five times in that ere once in our five wits.

**Romeo.** And we mean well in going to this masque;  
But 'tis no wit to go.

**Mercutio.** Why, may one ask?

50 **Romeo.** I dreamt a dream tonight.

**Mercutio.** And so did I.

**Romeo.** Well, what was yours?

**Mercutio.** That dreamers often lie.

**Romeo.** In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.

**Mercutio.** O, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you.  
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes

55 In shape no bigger than an agate stone  
On the forefinger of an alderman,  
Drawn with a team of little atomies

## **G PUN**

Identify two puns in lines 11–22.  
What effect do they have on the  
**mood** of this scene?

**29–32 Give . . . for me:** Give me a mask  
for an ugly face. I don't care if people  
notice my appearance. Here, look at  
my bushy eyebrows.

**34 betake . . . legs:** dance.

**35–38 Let . . . look on:** Let playful people  
tickle the grass (**rushes**) on the floor  
with their dancing. I'll follow the old  
saying (**grandsire phrase**) and just be  
a spectator.

**40–43 Tut . . . daylight:** Mercutio jokes,  
using various meanings of the word  
*dun*, which sounds like Romeo's last  
word, *done*. He concludes by saying they  
should not waste time (**burn daylight**).

**53–95** This famous speech is yet one  
more attempt by Mercutio to cheer up  
Romeo. He talks of Mab, queen of the  
fairies, a folktale character well-known  
to Shakespeare's audience. His language  
includes vivid descriptions, puns, and  
satires of people; and ultimately he gets  
caught up in his own wild imaginings. It  
is not necessary to understand everything  
Mercutio says to recognize the beauty of  
this born storyteller's tale.

**55 agate stone:** jewel for a ring.

**57 atomies:** tiny creatures.

## Behind the Curtain

Romeo and Juliet in the Globe Theatre's 2004 production



## Costume Design

Classic dramas such as *Romeo and Juliet* can be staged in many different ways. **Costumes** are one means of making a production distinctive. Think about the interpretations of the play pictured here. (Note: The middle shot is of Romeo and Juliet in the midst of the famous balcony scene, coming up in Act Two—and the ladder serves as the balcony!) How are the different costume choices in these photographs appropriate for the different productions?

Romeo and Juliet in the Globe Theatre's 2000 production



Romeo and Juliet in the Royal Ballet's 2003 production



Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep;  
 Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs,  
 60 The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;  
 Her traces, of the smallest spider's web;  
 Her collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams;  
 Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;  
 Her wagoner, a small grey-coated gnat,  
 65 Not half so big as a round little worm  
 Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid;  
 Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,  
 Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,  
 Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.  
 70 And in this state she gallops night by night  
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;  
 O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on curtsies straight;  
 O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;  
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
 75 Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,  
 Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.  
 Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit,  
 And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail  
 80 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,  
 Then dreams he of another benefice.  
 Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,  
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,  
 85 Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon  
 Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,  
 And being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two  
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
 That plaits the manes of horses in the night  
 90 And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hairs,  
 Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.  
 This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,  
 That presses them and learns them first to bear,  
 Making them women of good carriage.  
 95 This is she—

**Romeo.** Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!  
 Thou talkst of nothing.

**Mercutio.** True, I talk of dreams;  
 Which are the children of an idle brain,  
 Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;  
 Which is as thin of substance as the air,  
 100 And more inconstant than the wind, who woos

**59 spinners' legs:** spiders' legs.

**61 traces:** harness.

**68 joiner:** carpenter.

**77–78 Sometimes she . . . suit:** Sometimes Mab makes a member of the king's court dream of receiving special favors.

**81 benefice:** a well-paying position for a clergyman.

**84 ambuscadoes:** ambushes; **Spanish blades:** high-quality Spanish swords.

**89 plaits:** braids.

**96–103 True . . . South:** Mercutio is trying to keep Romeo from taking his dreams too seriously.

Even now the frozen bosom of the North  
And, being angered, puffs away from thence,  
Turning his face to the dew-dropping South.

**Benvolio.** This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves.

105 Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

**Romeo.** I fear, too early; for my mind misgives  
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,  
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date  
With this night's revels and expire the term

110 Of a despised life, closed in my breast,  
By some vile forfeit of untimely death. **H**  
But he that hath the steerage of my course  
Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen!

**Benvolio.** Strike, drum.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE 5 *A hall in Capulet's house; the scene of the party.*

*This is the scene of the party at which Romeo and Juliet finally meet. Romeo and his friends, disguised in their masks, arrive as uninvited guests. As he watches the dancers, Romeo suddenly sees Juliet and falls in love at first sight. At the same time, Tybalt recognizes Romeo's voice and knows he is a Montague. Tybalt alerts Capulet and threatens to kill Romeo. Capulet, however, insists that Tybalt behave himself and act like a gentleman. Promising revenge, Tybalt leaves. Romeo and Juliet meet and kiss in the middle of the dance floor. Only after they part do they learn each other's identity.*

[*Servingmen come forth with napkins.*]

**First Servingman.** Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift a trencher! he scrape a trencher!

**Second Servingman.** When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

5 **First Servingman.** Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard, look to the plate. Good thou, save me a piece of marchpane and, as thou lovest me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell. Anthony, and Potpan!

**Second Servingman.** Ay, boy, ready.

10 **First Servingman.** You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought for, in the great chamber.

**Third Servingman.** We cannot be here and there too. Cheerly, boys! Be brisk awhile, and the longer liver take all.

[*Exeunt.*]

106–111 Romeo, still depressed, fears that some terrible event caused by the stars will begin at the party. Remember the phrase “star-crossed lovers” from the prologue on page 1037.



TEKS 5B

### **H** CHARACTER FOILS

A **character foil** is a secondary character that acts as a contrast to a main character. This contrast helps to highlight the main character's qualities. Here, Mercutio's playfulness and high spirits contrast with Romeo's lovesick melancholy. What does Romeo's difference from and response to Mercutio in this scene tell you about Romeo?

1–13 These opening lines are a comic conversation among three servants as they work.

2 **trencher:** wooden plate.

6–7 **plate:** silverware and silver plates; **marchpane:** marzipan, a sweet made from almond paste.



[Maskers *appear with* Capulet, Lady Capulet, Juliet, *all the* Guests, *and* Servants.]

**Capulet.** Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes  
15 Unplagued with corns will have a bout with you.  
Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all  
Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty,  
She I'll swear hath corns. Am I come near ye now?  
Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day  
20 That I have worn a visor and could tell  
A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,  
Such as would please. 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone!  
You are welcome, gentlemen! Come, musicians, play.  
A hall, a hall! give room! and foot it, girls.

[*Music plays and they dance.*]

25 More light, you knaves! and turn the tables up,  
And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.  
Ah, sirrah, this unlooked-for sport comes well.  
Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet,  
For you and I are past our dancing days.  
30 How long is't now since last yourself and I  
Were in a mask?

**Second Capulet.** By'r Lady, thirty years.

**Capulet.** What, man? 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much!

**14–27** Capulet welcomes his guests and invites them all to dance. At the same time, like a good host, he is trying to get the party going. He alternates talking with his guests and telling the servants what to do.

**17–18** *She that . . . corns:* Any woman too shy to dance will be assumed to have corns, ugly and painful growths on the toes.

**20** *visor:* mask.

**28–38** Capulet and his relative watch the dancing as they talk of days gone by.



Guests dance at the Capulets' ball in the Royal Ballet's 1996 production.

'Tis since the nuptial of Lucentio,  
Come Pentecost as quickly as it will,  
35 Some five-and-twenty years, and then we masked.

**Second Capulet.** 'Tis more, 'tis more! His son is elder, sir;  
His son is thirty.

**Capulet.** Will you tell me that?  
His son was but a ward two years ago.

**Romeo** [*to a Servingman*]. What lady's that, which doth enrich  
the hand  
40 Of yonder knight?

**Servant.** I know not, sir.

**Romeo.** O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!  
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night  
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—  
45 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!  
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows  
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.  
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand  
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.  
50 Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!  
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night. ❶

**Tybalt.** This, by his voice, should be a Montague.  
Fetch me my rapier, boy. What, dares the slave  
Come hither, covered with an antic face,  
55 To flear and scorn at our solemnity?  
Now, by the stock and honor of my kin,  
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

**Capulet.** Why, how now, kinsman? Wherefore storm you so?

**Tybalt.** Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe;  
60 A villain, that is hither come in spite  
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

**Capulet.** Young Romeo is it?

**Tybalt.** 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

**Capulet.** Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone.  
'A bears him like a portly gentleman,  
65 And, to say truth, Verona brags of him  
To be a virtuous and well-governed youth.  
I would not for the wealth of all this town  
Here in my house do him disparagement.  
Therefore be patient, take no note of him.  
70 It is my will; the which if thou respect,

**33 nuptial:** marriage.

**39–40** Romeo has spotted Juliet across the dance floor and is immediately entranced by her beauty.

**44–45 Ethiop's ear:** the ear of an Ethiopian (African); **for earth too dear:** too precious for this world.

❶ **BLANK VERSE**

Romeo's awestruck speech is in rhymed couplets, not blank verse. Why do you think Shakespeare chose to use rhymed verse here? Explain your answer.

**52–57** Tybalt recognizes Romeo's voice and tells his servant to get his sword (**rapier**). He thinks Romeo has come to make fun of (**flear**) their party. *What does Tybalt want to do to Romeo?*

**64 portly:** dignified.

**68 do him disparagement:** speak critically or insultingly to him.

Show a fair presence and put off these frowns,  
An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

**Tybalt.** It fits when such a villain is a guest.  
I'll not endure him.

**Capulet.** He shall be endured.

75 **What, goodman boy? I say he shall. Go to!**  
Am I the master here, or you? Go to!  
You'll not endure him? God shall mend my soul!  
You'll make a mutiny among my guests!  
You will set cock-a-hoop! You'll be the man.

80 **Tybalt.** Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

**Capulet.** Go to, go to!  
You are a saucy boy. Is't so, indeed?  
This trick may chance to scathe you. I know what.  
You must contrary me! Marry, 'tis time.—  
Well said, my hearts!—You are a princox—go!

85 **Be quiet, or—More light, more light!—For shame!**  
I'll make you quiet; what!—Cheerly, my hearts!

**Tybalt.** Patience perforce with willful choler meeting  
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.

I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall,

90 **Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall.**

[*Exit.*]

**Romeo.** If I profane with my unworhiest hand  
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:  
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand  
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

95 **Juliet.** Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,  
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;  
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

**Romeo.** Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

100 **Juliet.** Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

**Romeo.** O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do!  
They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

**Juliet.** Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

**Romeo.** Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.

105 **Thus from my lips, by thine my sin is purged.**

[*kisses her*]

**Juliet.** Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

**72 semblance:** outward appearance.

**75 goodman boy:** a term used to address an inferior; **Go to:** Stop, that's enough!

**79 set cock-a-hoop:** cause everything to be upset.

**82–83 scathe:** harm; **I know . . . contrary me:** I know what I'm doing! Don't you dare challenge my authority.

**84–86** Capulet intersperses his angry speech to Tybalt with comments to his guests and servants.

**87–90 Patience . . . gall:** Tybalt says he will restrain himself, but his suppressed anger (**choler**) makes his body shake. *What do you think he will do about his anger?*

**91–108** Romeo and Juliet are in the middle of the dance floor, with eyes only for each other. They touch the palms of their hands together. Their conversation revolves around Romeo's comparison of his lips to pilgrims who have traveled to a holy shrine. Juliet goes along with the comparison.

**105 purged:** washed away.





Romeo and Juliet in the Shakespeare & Company's 2004 Spring Tour Production

**Romeo.** Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!  
Give me my sin again.

*[kisses her]*

**Juliet.** You kiss by the book.

**Nurse.** Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

110 **Romeo.** What is her mother?

**Nurse.** Marry, bachelor,  
Her mother is the lady of the house.  
And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous.  
I nursed her daughter that you talked withal.  
I tell you, he that can lay hold of her

115 Shall have the chinks.

**Romeo.** Is she a Capulet?  
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.

**108 kiss by the book:** Juliet could mean "You kiss like an expert, someone who has studied and practiced." Or she could be teasing Romeo, meaning "You kiss coldly, as though you had learned how by reading a book."

**109** At the nurse's message, Juliet walks to her mother.

**115 shall have the chinks:** shall become rich.

**116 my life . . . debt:** my life belongs to my enemy.



**Benvolio.** Away, be gone, the sport is at the best.

**Romeo.** Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

**Capulet.** Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone;  
120 We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.

[*They whisper in his ear.*]

Is it e'en so? Why then, I thank you all.

I thank you, honest gentlemen. Good night.

More torches here! [*Exeunt Maskers.*] Come on then, let's to bed.

Ah, sirrah, by my fay, it waxes late;

125 I'll to my rest.

[*Exeunt all but Juliet and Nurse.*]

**Juliet.** Come hither, nurse. What is yond gentleman?

**Nurse.** The son and heir of old Tiberio.

**Juliet.** What's he that now is going out of door?

**Nurse.** Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

130 **Juliet.** What's he that follows there, that would not dance?

**Nurse.** I know not.

**Juliet.** Go ask his name.—If he be married,  
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

**Nurse.** His name is Romeo, and a Montague,  
135 The only son of your great enemy.

**Juliet.** My only love, sprung from my only hate!  
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!  
Prodigious birth of love it is to me  
That I must love a loathed enemy.

140 **Nurse.** What's this? what's this?

**Juliet.** A rhyme I learnt even now  
Of one I danced withal.

[*One calls within, "Juliet."*]

**Nurse.** Anon, anon!  
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.

[*Exeunt.*]

120 towards: coming up.

126–130 Juliet asks the nurse to identify various guests as they leave. *What does she really want to know?*

137–138 **Too early . . . too late:** I fell in love with him before I learned who he is; **prodigious:** abnormal; unlucky. *How does Juliet feel about the fact that she's fallen in love with the son of her father's enemy?*

### Language Coach

**Word Definitions** Suppose that the Nurse is calling "Anon, anon!" (line 141) in response to the voice offstage calling Juliet. What do you think *anon* means here?

## Comprehension

- Recall** What warning does Prince Escalus give the Capulets and the Montagues?
- Recall** What agreement do Paris and Lord Capulet reach?
- Recall** Why does Romeo go to the Capulets' party?
- Clarify** What is the chief obstacle to Romeo and Juliet's love?



**READING 4** Explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text.

**5B** Analyze how authors develop complex yet believable characters through a range of literary devices, including character foils.

**RC-9(A)** Reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension.

## Literary Analysis

- 5. Reading Shakespearean Drama** Review the chart you created. Which events in Act One seem most important in setting up **conflicts** in the plot?
- Identify Character Foils** A foil is a character who highlights, through sharp contrast, the qualities of another character. As mentioned on page 1057, Mercutio is a comic foil to Romeo. Identify two other characters in Act One who are foils for each other. What do you learn about the characters by seeing them in contrast to one another?
- Analyze Foreshadowing** Examine the examples of foreshadowing listed in the chart. To clarify your understanding of the examples, try paraphrasing them. Then explain what event each ominous passage foreshadows.

Foreshadowing	Paraphrase	What It Hints At
<p><i>I fear, too early; for my mind misgives Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars, Shall bitterly begin his fearful date With this night's revels and expire the term Of a despised life, closed in my breast, By some vile forfeit of untimely death. - Romeo (Act One, Scene 4, lines 106–111)</i></p>		
<p><i>My grave is like to be my wedding bed. - Juliet (Act One, Scene 5, line 133)</i></p>		

- 8. Evaluate Blank Verse** Find and copy a group of four lines of blank verse in Act One, marking the unstressed (˘) and the stressed (ˎ) syllables in each line. Then explain whether the lines show the typical **iambic pentameter** pattern or contain rhythmic variations. In your opinion, does the passage accurately capture the sound of spoken English? Explain.

## Literary Criticism

- Critical Interpretations** Works of great acclaim sometimes fail to live up to expectations. According to critic Robert Graves, the “remarkable thing about Shakespeare is that he is really very good—in spite of all the people who say he is very good.” Is *Romeo and Juliet* living up to your expectations? Explain.

# Prologue

*In a sonnet the Chorus summarizes what has happened so far in the play. He reviews how Romeo and Juliet have fallen in love and suggests both the problems and the delights they now face. He also includes hints about what will result from the events of Act One.*

[Enter Chorus.]

**Chorus.** Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,  
And young affection gapes to be his heir.  
That fair for which love groaned for and would die,  
With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair.

5 Now Romeo is beloved, and loves again,  
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks;  
But to his foe supposed he must complain,  
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.  
Being held a foe, he may not have access  
10 To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,  
And she as much in love, her means much less  
To meet her new beloved anywhere;  
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,  
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.

[Exit.]

**1–4 Now . . . fair:** Romeo's love for Rosaline (**old desire**) is now dead. His new love (**young affection**) replaces the old. Compared to Juliet, Rosaline no longer seems so beautiful.

**6** *What attracted Romeo and Juliet to each other?*

**7 but . . . complain:** Juliet, a Capulet, is Romeo's supposed enemy, yet she is the one to whom he must plead (**complain**) his love.

**14 temp'ring . . . sweet:** moderating great difficulties with extreme delights.

## Act Two

### SCENE 1 *A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.*

*Later in the evening of the party, Romeo returns alone to the Capulet home, hoping for another glimpse of Juliet. He climbs the wall and hides outside, in the orchard. Meanwhile, Benvolio and Mercutio come looking for him, but he remains hidden behind the wall. Mercutio makes fun of Romeo and his lovesick condition. Keep in mind that Mercutio and Benvolio think Romeo is still in love with Rosaline, since they know nothing about his meeting with Juliet.*

[Enter Romeo alone.]

**Romeo.** Can I go forward when my heart is here?  
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy center out.

*[climbs the wall and leaps down within it]*

[Enter Benvolio with Mercutio.]

**Benvolio.** Romeo! my cousin Romeo! Romeo!

**1–2 Can . . . out:** How can I leave when Juliet is still here? My body (**dull earth**) has to find its heart (**center**).

Balcony scene from the Globe Theatre's 2004 production







**Mercutio.** He is wise,  
And, on my life, hath stol'n him home to bed.

5 **Benvolio.** He ran this way, and leapt this orchard wall.  
Call, good Mercutio.

**Mercutio.** Nay, I'll conjure too.  
Romeo! humors! madman! passion! lover!  
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;  
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied!

10 Cry but "Ay me!" pronounce but "love" and "dove";  
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word, **A**  
One nickname for her purblind son and heir,  
Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim  
When King Cophetua loved the beggar maid!  
15 He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;  
The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.  
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,  
By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,  
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,  
20 And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,  
That in thy likeness thou appear to us!

**Benvolio.** An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

**Mercutio.** This cannot anger him. 'Twould anger him  
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle  
25 Of some strange nature, letting it there stand  
Till she had laid it and conjured it down.  
That were some spite; my invocation  
Is fair and honest and in his mistress' name  
I conjure only but to raise up him.

30 **Benvolio.** Come, he hath hid himself among these trees  
To be consorted with the humorous night.  
Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

**Mercutio.** If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.  
Now will he sit under a medlar tree  
35 And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit  
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.  
Oh, Romeo, that she were, O, that she were  
An open et cetera, thou a pop'rin pear!  
Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed;  
40 This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.  
Come, shall we go?

**Benvolio.** Go then, for 'tis in vain  
To seek him here that means not to be found.

[*Exeunt.*]

6 **conjure:** use magic to call him.

8–21 **Appear . . . us:** Mercutio jokes about Romeo's lovesickness. He tries to make Romeo appear by suggestively naming parts of Rosaline's body.

**A GRAMMAR AND STYLE**

In lines 8–11, Shakespeare creates rhythm through **parallelism**, or the use of similar grammatical structures to express related ideas. Notice how each of these lines begins with a verb in the imperative mood.

20 **demesnes:** areas; **adjacent:** next to.

23–29 **'Twould . . . raise up him:** It would anger him if I called a stranger to join his beloved (**mistress**), but I'm only calling Romeo to join her.

31 **to be . . . night:** to keep company with the night, which is as gloomy as Romeo is.

34 **medlar:** a fruit that looks like a small brown apple.

39 **truckle bed:** trundle bed, a small bed that fits in beneath a bigger one.

## SCENE 2 *Capulet's orchard.*

*The following is one of the most famous scenes in all literature. The speeches contain some of the most beautiful poetry Shakespeare ever wrote.*

*Juliet appears on the balcony outside her room. She cannot see Romeo, who stands in the garden just below. At the beginning of the scene, both characters are speaking private thoughts to themselves. Romeo, however, can hear Juliet as she expresses her love for him despite his family name. Eventually, he speaks directly to her, and they declare their love for each other. Just before dawn Romeo leaves to make plans for their wedding.*

[Enter Romeo.]

**Romeo.** He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[Enter Juliet above at a window.]

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

5 Who is already sick and pale with grief

That thou her maid art far more fair than she.

Be not her maid, since she is envious;

Her vestal livery is but sick and green,

And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

10 It is my lady; O, it is my love!

O that she knew she were!

She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?

Her eye discourses; I will answer it.

I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks.

15 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars

20 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night.

See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O that I were a glove upon that hand,

25 That I might touch that cheek! **B**

**Juliet.** Ay me!

**Romeo.** She speaks.

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art

As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,

As is a winged messenger of heaven

**1 He jests . . . wound:** Romeo has overheard Mercutio and comments that Mercutio makes fun of love because he has never been wounded by it.

**2–9 But soft . . . cast it off:** Romeo sees Juliet at the window. For a moment he is speechless (**soft:** be still), but then he describes her beauty in glowing images.

**13–14 Her eye . . . speaks:** Romeo shifts back and forth between wanting to speak to Juliet and being afraid.

**15–22 Two of . . . not night:** Romeo compares Juliet's eyes to stars in the sky.

### **B** SOLILOQUY

To whom is Romeo speaking in lines 2–25? Explain what this soliloquy tells you about Romeo's thoughts.

**25** Juliet begins to speak, not knowing that Romeo is nearby.

**26–32 thou art . . . of the air:** He compares Juliet to an angel (**winged messenger of heaven**) who stands on (**bestrides**) the clouds.

Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes  
30 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him  
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds  
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

**Juliet.** O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name!  
35 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

**Romeo** [*aside*]. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

**Juliet.** 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
40 What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.  
45 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;  
And for that name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

**Romeo.** I take thee at thy word.  
50 Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

**Juliet.** What man art thou that, thus bescreened in night,  
So stumblest on my counsel?

**Romeo.** By a name  
I know not how to tell thee who I am.  
55 My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
Because it is an enemy to thee.  
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

**Juliet.** My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words  
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound.  
60 Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

**Romeo.** Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

**Juliet.** How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?  
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,  
And the place death, considering who thou art,  
65 If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

**33 wherefore:** why. Juliet asks why Romeo is who he is—someone from her enemy's family. *What does Juliet ask Romeo to do? What does she promise to do?*

**43–47** Juliet tries to convince herself that a name is just a meaningless word that has nothing to do with the person. She asks Romeo to get rid of (**doff**) his name.

**52–53** Juliet is startled that someone hiding (**bescreened**) nearby hears her private thoughts (**counsel**).

**63–65** *What warning does Juliet give Romeo?*

**Romeo.** With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls;  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

70 **Juliet.** If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

**Romeo.** Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye  
Than twenty of their swords! Look thou but sweet,  
And I am proof against their enmity.

**Juliet.** I would not for the world they saw thee here.

75 **Romeo.** I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;  
And but thou love me, let them find me here.  
My life were better ended by their hate  
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love. **C**

**Juliet.** By whose direction foundst thou out this place?

80 **Romeo.** By love, that first did prompt me to enquire.  
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.  
I am no pilot, yet, wert thou as far  
As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,  
I would adventure for such merchandise.

85 **Juliet.** Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face;  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.  
Fain would I dwell on form—fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!  
90 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say "Ay";  
And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swearst,  
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,  
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

95 Or if thou thinkst I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light;

100 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou overheardst, ere I was ware,  
My true love's passion. Therefore pardon me,  
105 And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

**66–69 With . . . me:** Love helped me climb (**o'erperch**) the walls. Neither walls nor your relatives are a hindrance (**let**) to me.

**72–73 Look . . . enmity:** Smile on me, and I will be defended against my enemies' hatred (**enmity**).

**78 than death . . . love:** than my death postponed (**prorogued**) if you don't love me.

### **C CHARACTER**

Reread lines 75–78, and explain what Romeo means. Do you think he is seriously thinking of death here, or is he just exaggerating because he's head over heels in love? Explain.

**85–89 Thou . . . compliment:** Had I known you were listening, I would have gladly (**fain**) behaved more properly, but now it's too late for good manners (**farewell compliment**). *Why is Juliet embarrassed that Romeo overheard her?*

**92–93 At . . . laughs:** Jove, the king of the gods, laughs at lovers who lie to each other.

**95–101 Or if . . . strange:** You might think I've fallen in love too easily and that I'm too outspoken. But I'll be truer to you than those who play games to hide their real feelings (**be strange**).



**Romeo.** Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,  
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

**Juliet.** O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,  
110 That monthly changes in her circled orb,  
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

**Romeo.** What shall I swear by?

**Juliet.** Do not swear at all;  
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,  
Which is the god of my idolatry,  
115 And I'll believe thee.

109–111 *Why doesn't Juliet want Romeo to swear by the moon?*



Balcony scene from the Seattle Repertory Theatre's 2003 production

**Romeo.** If my heart's dear love—

**Juliet.** Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,  
I have no joy of this contract tonight.

It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;  
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be

120 Ere one can say "It lightens." Sweet, good night!  
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,  
May prove a beauteous flow'r when next we meet.  
Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest  
Come to thy heart as that within my breast! **D**

125 **Romeo.** O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

**Juliet.** What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

**Romeo.** The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

**Juliet.** I gave thee mine before thou didst request it;  
And yet I would it were to give again.

130 **Romeo.** Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

**Juliet.** But to be frank and give it thee again.

And yet I wish but for the thing I have.

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,

135 The more I have, for both are infinite.  
I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!

[Nurse *calls within.*]

Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.  
Stay but a little, I will come again.

[*Exit.*]

**Romeo.** O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard,  
140 Being in night, all this is but a dream,  
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

[*Re-enter Juliet, above.*]

**Juliet.** Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.

If that thy bent of love be honorable,  
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,

145 By one that I'll procure to come to thee,  
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;  
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay  
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

**Nurse** [*within*]. Madam!

150 **Juliet.** I come, anon.—But if thou meanst not well,  
I do beseech thee—

**117 I have . . . contract:** I am concerned about this declaration of love (**contract**).

#### **D CHARACTER**

Reread lines 116–124, and describe Juliet's attitude at this point. How does she feel about Romeo? Why does she seem uneasy about their relationship?

**137–138 anon:** right away. Juliet calls to her nurse but asks Romeo to wait, as she will come back soon.

**143–146 If that . . . rite:** I'll send a messenger to you tomorrow. If your intention is to marry me, tell the messenger where and when the ceremony will be.

**150–151 But if . . . thee:** Juliet is still worried that Romeo is not serious.

**Nurse** [*within*]. Madam!

**Juliet.** By-and-by I come.—  
To cease thy suit and leave me to my grief.  
Tomorrow will I send.

**Romeo.** So thrive my soul—

**Juliet.** A thousand times good night! [*Exit.*]

155 **Romeo.** A thousand times the worse, to want thy light!  
Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books;  
But love from love, towards school with heavy looks.

[*Enter Juliet again, above.*]

**Juliet.** Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falc'ner's voice  
To lure this tassel-gentle back again! **E**

160 Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud;  
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,  
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine  
With repetition of my Romeo's name.  
Romeo!

165 **Romeo.** It is my soul that calls upon my name.  
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,  
Like softest music to attending ears!

**Juliet.** Romeo!

**Romeo.** My sweet?

**Juliet.** What o'clock tomorrow  
Shall I send to thee?

**Romeo.** By the hour of nine.

170 **Juliet.** I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then.  
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

**Romeo.** Let me stand here till thou remember it.

**Juliet.** I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,  
Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

175 **Romeo.** And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,  
Forgetting any other home but this.

**Juliet.** 'Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone—  
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,  
That lets it hop a little from her hand,

180 Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,  
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,  
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

**Romeo.** I would I were thy bird.

**156–157 Love . . . looks:** The simile means that lovers meet as eagerly as schoolboys leave their books; lovers separate with the sadness of boys going to school.



TEKS 2C

**E FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

In lines 158–159, Juliet is using a metaphor to describe how desperately she wants to call out Romeo's name. Much of Shakespeare's **figurative language** reflects the historical and cultural setting in which he wrote; this figurative language reflects the popularity of falconry in Elizabethan times. Does language that reflects a historical setting help draw you into the play? Explain.

**158–163 Hist . . . name:** Listen, Romeo, I wish I could speak your name as loudly as a falconer calls his falcon (**tassel-gentle**), but because of my parents I must whisper. **Echo** was a nymph in Greek mythology whose unreturned love for Narcissus caused her to waste away till only her voice was left.

**177–182 I would . . . liberty:** I know you must go, but I want you close to me like a pet bird that a thoughtless child (**wanton**) keeps on a string.

**Juliet.** Sweet, so would I.  
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

185 Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

[*Exit.*]

**Romeo.** Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!  
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!  
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,

190 His help to crave and my dear hap to tell.

[*Exit.*]

### SCENE 3 *Friar Laurence's cell in the monastery.*

*Romeo goes from Capulet's garden to the monastery where Friar Laurence lives. The friar knows Romeo well and often gives him advice. As the scene begins, Friar Laurence is gathering herbs in the early morning. He talks of good and bad uses for herbs. Keep this in mind, since Friar Laurence's skill at mixing herbs becomes important later in the play. Romeo tells the friar that he loves Juliet and wants to marry her. The friar is amazed that Romeo has forgotten about Rosaline so easily and suggests that Romeo might be acting in haste. Eventually, however, he agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet, hoping that the marriage will end the feud between their families.*

[*Enter Friar Laurence alone, with a basket.*]

**Friar Laurence.** The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,  
Chequ'ring the Eastern clouds with streaks of light;  
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels  
From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.

5 Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye  
The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,  
I must upfill this osier cage of ours  
With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.  
The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb,

10 What is her burying grave, that is her womb;  
And from her womb children of divers kind  
We sucking on her natural bosom find;  
Many for many virtues excellent,  
None but for some, and yet all different.  
15 O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies  
In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities;  
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live  
But to the earth some special good doth give;

#### Language Coach

**Etymology** *Cherish* comes from the Latin root *carus*, meaning "dear; valued." What does *cherishing* mean in line 184? How can someone kill by cherishing?

**189–190 ghostly father:** spiritual adviser or priest; **dear hap:** good fortune.

**1–30** Friar Laurence begins his speech by describing how night changes into day. He then speaks of the herbs he is collecting. The friar is particularly fascinated with the idea that in herbs as well as man both good and evil can exist.

**4 Titan** is the god whose chariot pulls the sun into the sky each morning.

**7 osier cage:** willow basket.

**9–12 The earth . . . find:** The same earth that acts as a tomb is also the womb, or birthplace, of various useful plants that people can harvest.

**15–18 mickle:** great. The friar says that nothing from the earth is so evil that it doesn't do some good.



Nor aught so good but, strained from that fair use,  
20 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.  
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,  
And vice sometime's by action dignified.  
Within the infant rind of this small flower  
Poison hath residence, and medicine power;  
25 For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;  
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.  
Two such opposed kings encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs—grace and rude will;  
And where the worser is predominant,  
30 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

[Enter Romeo.]

**Romeo.** Good morrow, father.

**Friar Laurence.** Benedicite!  
What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?  
Young son, it argues a distempered head  
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed.  
35 Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,  
And where care lodges sleep will never lie;  
But where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain  
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.  
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure  
40 Thou art uproused with some distemp'ature;  
Or if not so, then here I hit it right—  
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

**Romeo.** That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

**Friar Laurence.** God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?

45 **Romeo.** With Rosaline, my ghostly father? No.  
I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

**Friar Laurence.** That's my good son! But where hast thou been then?

**Romeo.** I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.  
I have been feasting with mine enemy,  
50 Where on a sudden one hath wounded me  
That's by me wounded. Both our remedies  
Within thy help and holy physic lies.  
I bear no hatred, blessed man, for, lo,  
My intercession likewise steads my foe.  
55 **Friar Laurence.** Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.  
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

**23–26 Within . . . heart:** He holds a flower that can be used either as a poison or as a medicine. If the flower is smelled, its fragrance can improve health in each part of the body; if it is eaten, it causes death.

**28 grace and rude will:** good and evil. Both exist in people as well as in plants.

**31 Benedicite** (bě'ně-dī'sī-tē'): God bless you.

**33–42 it argues . . . tonight:** Only a disturbed (**distempered**) mind could make you get up so early. Old people may have trouble sleeping, but it is not normal for someone as young as you. Or were you up all night?

**44 God . . . Rosaline:** The friar is shocked that Romeo has not been to bed yet. *Where does he think Romeo has been?*

**49–56** Romeo tries to explain the situation, asking for help both for himself and his "foe" (Juliet). The friar does not understand Romeo's convoluted language and asks him to speak clearly so that he can help.

- Romeo.** Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set  
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;  
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,  
60 And all combined, save what thou must combine  
By holy marriage. When, and where, and how  
We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow,  
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,  
That thou consent to marry us today.
- 65 **Friar Laurence.** Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here!  
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,  
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies  
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

66–68 *What is Friar Laurence saying in these lines?*



Friar Laurence counsels Romeo in the University of Victoria's 1998 production.

Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine  
70 Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!  
How much salt water thrown away in waste,  
To season love, that of it doth not taste!  
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,  
Thy old groans ring yet in mine ancient ears.  
75 Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit  
Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.  
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,  
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.  
And art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence then:

80 Women may fall when there's no strength in men.

**Romeo.** Thou chidst me oft for loving Rosaline.

**Friar Laurence.** For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

**Romeo.** And badest me bury love.

**Friar Laurence.** Not in a grave  
To lay one in, another ought to have.

85 **Romeo.** I pray thee chide not. She whom I love now  
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.  
The other did not so.

**Friar Laurence.** O, she knew well  
Thy love did read by rote, that could not spell.  
But come, young waverer, come go with me.

90 In one respect I'll thy assistant be;  
For this alliance may so happy prove  
To turn your households' rancor to pure love. **F**

**Romeo.** O, let us hence! I stand on sudden haste.

**Friar Laurence.** Wisely, and slow. They stumble that run fast.

[*Exeunt.*]

**69 brine:** salt water—that is, the tears that Romeo has been shedding for Rosaline.

**80 Women . . . men:** If men are so weak, women may be forgiven for sinning.

**81–82 chidst:** scolded. The friar replies that he scolded Romeo for being lovesick, not for loving.

**85–88 She whom . . . spell:** Romeo says that the woman he loves feels the same way about him. That wasn't true of Rosaline. The friar replies that Rosaline knew that he didn't know what real love is.

**91–92 For this . . . prove:** this marriage may work out so well; **rancor:** bitter hate.

**F CHARACTER**

Why does Friar Laurence agree to help Romeo marry Juliet, despite his worry that Romeo falls in love too easily? Explain the friar's **motives**.

## SCENE 4 *A street.*

*Several hours after his meeting with Friar Laurence, Romeo meets Benvolio and Mercutio in the street. He is excited and happy; his mood is key to the comic nature of this scene, which includes much talk of swordplay and many suggestive jokes. Mercutio makes fun of Tybalt and teases Romeo. The nurse comes to carry a message from Romeo to Juliet. Romeo tells her that Juliet should meet him at Friar Laurence's cell for their secret marriage ceremony.*

[*Enter Benvolio and Mercutio.*]

**Mercutio.** Where the devil should this Romeo be?  
Came he not home tonight?

**Benvolio.** Not to his father's. I spoke with his man.

**Mercutio.** Why, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,  
5 Torments him so that he will sure run mad.

**Benvolio.** Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet,  
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

**Mercutio.** A challenge, on my life.

**Benvolio.** Romeo will answer it.

10 **Mercutio.** Any man that can write may answer a letter.

**Benvolio.** Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares,  
being dared.

**Mercutio.** Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! stabbed with a  
white wench's black eye; shot through the ear with a love song;  
15 the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft;  
and is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

**Benvolio.** Why, what is Tybalt?

**Mercutio.** More than Prince of Cats, I can tell you. O, he's the  
courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing  
20 pricksong—keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his  
minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom! the very  
butcher of a silk button, a duelist, a duelist! a gentleman of the  
very first house, of the first and second cause. Ah, the immortal  
*passado!* the *punto reverso!* the *hay!*

25 **Benvolio.** The what?

**Mercutio.** The pox of such antic, lipping, affecting fantasticoes—  
these new tuners of accent! “By Jesu, a very good blade! a very  
tall man! a very good whore!” Why, is not this a lamentable thing,  
grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies,  
30 these fashion-mongers, these perdona-mi's, who stand so much  
on the new form that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench?  
O, their bones, their bones!

[*Enter Romeo, no longer moody.*]

**Benvolio.** Here comes Romeo! here comes Romeo!

**Mercutio.** Without his roe, like a dried herring. O, flesh, flesh,  
35 how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch  
flowed in. Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen wench (marry,  
she had a better love to berhyme her), Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra  
a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots, Thisbe a grey eye

3 **man:** servant.

**6–12 Tybalt . . . dared:** Tybalt, still angry about Romeo's crashing the Capulet party, has sent a letter challenging Romeo to a duel. Benvolio says that Romeo will do more than answer the letter; he will accept Tybalt's challenge and fight him.

**15 blind bow-boy's butt-shaft:** Cupid's dull practice arrow. Mercutio suggests that Romeo fell in love with very little work on Cupid's part.

**18–24 More than . . . hay:** Mercutio mocks Tybalt's name. **Prince of Cats** refers to a cat in a fable, named Tybalt, who was known for his slyness. Then Mercutio makes fun of Tybalt's fancy new style of dueling, comparing it to precision singing (**pricksong**). **Passado, punto reverso**, and **hay** were terms used in the new dueling style.

**26–32 The pox . . . their bones:** Mercutio continues to make fun of people who embrace new styles and new manners of speaking.

**34–39 without his roe:** only part of himself (Mercutio makes fun of Romeo's name and his lovesickness); **numbers:** verses. Mercutio mentions Petrarch, who wrote sonnets to his love, Laura. According to Mercutio, Romeo's feelings for Rosaline are so intense that great loves in literature—Laura, Dido, and others—could never measure up.



or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, *bon jour!* There's  
40 a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the  
counterfeit fairly last night.

**Romeo.** Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give  
you?

**Mercutio.** The slip, sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?

45 **Romeo.** Pardon, good Mercutio. My business was great, and in  
such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

**Mercutio.** That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains  
a man to bow in the hams.

**Romeo.** Meaning, to curtsy.

50 **Mercutio.** Thou hast most kindly hit it.

**Romeo.** A most courteous exposition.

**Mercutio.** Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

**Romeo.** Pink for flower.

**Mercutio.** Right.

55 **Romeo.** Why, then is my pump well-flowered.

**Mercutio.** Well said! Follow me this jest now till thou hast worn  
out thy pump, that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest  
may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

**Romeo.** Oh, single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!

60 **Mercutio.** Come between us, good Benvolio! My wits faint.

**Romeo.** Switch and spurs, switch and spurs! or I'll cry a match.

**Mercutio.** Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase, I am done;  
for thou hast more of the wild goose in one of thy wits than, I  
am sure, I have in my whole five. Was I with you there for the  
65 goose?

**Romeo.** Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast  
not there for the goose.

**Mercutio.** I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

**Romeo.** Nay, good goose, bite not!

70 **Mercutio.** Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp  
sauce.

**Romeo.** And is it not, then, well served in to a sweet goose?

**Mercutio.** O, here's a wit of cheveril, that stretches from an inch  
narrow to an ell broad!

**39–44 *bon jour*:** “Good day” in French; **There's . . . last night:** Here's a greeting to match your fancy French trousers (**slop**). You did a good job of getting away from us last night. (A piece of counterfeit money was called a **slip**.)

**44–81** In these lines, Romeo and Mercutio have a battle of wits. They keep trying to top each other with funnier comments and cleverer puns.

**55 *pump*:** shoe; **well-flowered:** Shoes were “pinked,” or punched out in flowerlike designs.

**61 *Switch . . . match*:** Keep going, or I'll claim victory.

**64–65 *Was . . . goose*:** Have I proved that you are a foolish person?

**73 *cheveril*:** kidskin, which is flexible. Mercutio means that a little wit stretches a long way.

75 **Romeo.** I stretch it out for that word “broad,” which, added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

**Mercutio.** Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature. For this driveling love is like  
80 a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

**Benvolio.** Stop there, stop there!

**Mercutio.** Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.

**Benvolio.** Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

85 **Mercutio.** O, thou art deceived! I would have made it short; for I was come to the whole depth of my tale, and meant indeed to occupy the argument no longer.

*[Enter Nurse and Peter, her servant. He is carrying a large fan.]*

**Romeo.** Here’s goodly gear!

**Mercutio.** A sail, a sail!

90 **Benvolio.** Two, two! a shirt and a smock.

**Nurse.** Peter!

**Peter.** Anon.

**Nurse.** My fan, Peter.

**Mercutio.** Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan’s the fairer of  
95 the two.

**Nurse.** God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

**Mercutio.** God ye good-den, fair gentlewoman.

**Nurse.** Is it good-den?

**Mercutio.** ’Tis no less, I tell ye, for the bawdy hand of the dial is  
100 now upon the prick of noon.

**Nurse.** Out upon you! What a man are you!

**Romeo.** One, gentlewoman, that God hath made himself to mar.

**Nurse.** By my troth, it is well said. “For himself to mar,” quoth’a? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young  
105 Romeo?

**Romeo.** I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you sought him. I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse.

**80–81 great natural:** an idiot, like a jester or clown who carries a fool’s stick (**bauble**).

**88–89 goodly gear:** something fine to joke about; **a sail:** Mercutio likens the nurse in all her petticoats to a huge ship coming toward them.

**93** Fans were usually carried only by fine ladies. The nurse is trying to pretend that she is more than a servant.

**Nurse.** You say well.

110 **Mercutio.** Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, i' faith! wisely, wisely.

**Nurse.** If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

**Benvolio.** She will endite him to some supper.

**Mercutio.** A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

115 **Romeo.** What hast thou found?

**Mercutio.** No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

[*sings*]

120 “An old hare hoar,  
And an old hare hoar,  
Is very good meat in Lent.  
But a hare that is hoar,  
Is too much for a score  
When it hoars ere it be spent.”

Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner thither.

125 **Romeo.** I will follow you.

**Mercutio.** Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, [*sings*] lady, lady, lady.

[*Exeunt Mercutio and Benvolio.*]

**Nurse.** Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery?

130 **Romeo.** A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk and will speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month.

**Nurse.** An 'a speak anything against me, I'll take him down, an 'a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skainsmates. [*turning to Peter*] And thou must  
135 stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

**Peter.** I saw no man use you at his pleasure. If I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

**112–113 confidence:** The nurse means *conference*; she uses big words without understanding their meaning; **endite:** Benvolio makes fun of the nurse by using this word rather than *invite*.

**114–124** Mercutio calls the nurse a **bawd**, or woman who runs a house of prostitution. His song uses the insulting puns **hare**, a rabbit or prostitute, and **hoar**, old.

**128 ropery:** roguery, or jokes.

**133–134** The nurse is angry that Mercutio treated her like one of his loose women (**flirt-gills**) or his gangsterlike friends (**skainsmates**).

## Behind the Curtain

The Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival's 1992 production



## Set Design

Often, set designers recreate the world of *Romeo and Juliet* in strikingly unique ways. Designers of the productions pictured here created radically different **sets** for the balcony scene. List three adjectives you would use to describe each set. What factors might make a designer choose to create one of these particular set styles?

The Royal Shakespeare Company's 1992 production



The University of South Carolina's 1999 production





140 **Nurse.** Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me  
quivers. Scurvy knave! Pray you, sir, a word; and as I told you,  
my young lady bade me enquire you out. What she bid me say,  
I will keep to myself; but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her  
into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of  
145 behavior, as they say; for the gentlewoman is young; and  
therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly it were an ill  
thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

**Romeo.** Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest  
unto thee—

150 **Nurse.** Good heart, and i' faith I will tell her as much. Lord,  
Lord! she will be a joyful woman.

**Romeo.** What wilt thou tell her, nurse? Thou dost not mark me.

**Nurse.** I will tell her, sir, that you do protest, which, as I take it,  
is a gentlemanlike offer.

155 **Romeo.** Bid her devise  
Some means to come to shrift this afternoon;  
And there she shall at Friar Laurence' cell  
Be shrived and married. Here is for thy pains.

**Nurse.** No, truly, sir; not a penny.

160 **Romeo.** Go to! I say you shall.

**Nurse.** This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

**Romeo.** And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall.

Within this hour my man shall be with thee  
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair,

165 Which to the high topgallant of my joy  
Must be my convoy in the secret night.  
Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.  
Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

**Nurse.** Now God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

170 **Romeo.** What sayst thou, my dear nurse?

**Nurse.** Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,  
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

**Romeo.** I warrant thee my man's as true as steel.

**Nurse.** Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord!  
175 when 'twas a little prating thing—O, there is a nobleman in  
town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard; but she, good  
soul, had as lief see a toad, a very toad, as see him. I anger her

**142–147** The nurse warns Romeo that he'd better mean what he said about marrying Juliet. She holds back her news while she tries to decide if Romeo's love is genuine.

**148 commend me:** give my respectful greetings.

**155–159** Romeo tells the nurse to have Juliet come to Friar Laurence's cell this afternoon, using the excuse that she is going to confess her sins (**shrift**). There she will receive forgiveness for her sins (**be shrived**) and be married.

**164–165 tackled stair:** rope ladder;  
**topgallant:** highest point.

**167–172 quit thy pains:** reward you. The nurse then asks Romeo if his servant can be trusted, then quotes the saying that two can keep a secret but not three.

**174–177** The nurse begins to babble about Paris' proposal but says that Juliet would rather look at a toad than at Paris.

sometimes, and tell her that Paris is the properer man; but I'll warrant you, when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout in the  
180 versal world. Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?

**Romeo.** Ay, nurse, what of that? Both with an R.

**Nurse.** Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R is for the—No; I know it begins with some other letter; and she hath the prettiest  
185 sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

**Romeo.** Commend me to thy lady.

**Nurse.** Ay, a thousand times. [*Exit* Romeo.] Peter!

**Peter.** Anon.

190 **Nurse.** Peter, take my fan, and go before, and apace.  
[*Exeunt.*]

**179–186 clout:** old cloth; **the versal world:** the entire world; **Doth not . . . hear it:** The nurse tries to recall a clever saying that Juliet made up about Romeo and rosemary, the herb for remembrance, but cannot remember it. She is sure that the two words couldn't begin with *R* because this letter sounds like a snarling dog; **sententious:** The nurse means *sentences*.

**190 apace:** quickly.

## SCENE 5 *Capulet's orchard.*

*Juliet is a nervous wreck, having waited for more than three hours for the nurse to return. When the nurse does arrive, she simply won't come to the point. Juliet gets more and more upset, until the nurse finally reveals the wedding arrangements.*

[*Enter* Juliet.]

**Juliet.** The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;  
In half an hour she promised to return.

Perchance she cannot meet him. That's not so.

O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,

5 Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams

Driving back shadows over lowering hills.

Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw Love,

And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings. **G**

Now is the sun upon the highmost hill

10 Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve

Is three long hours; yet she is not come.

Had she affections and warm youthful blood,

She would be as swift in motion as a ball;

My words would bandy her to my sweet love,

15 And his to me.

But old folks, many feign as they were dead—

Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

[*Enter* Nurse *and* Peter.] O God, she comes! O honey nurse,  
what news?

**4–6 Love's . . . hills:** Love's messengers should be thoughts, which travel ten times faster than sunbeams.

**7 nimble-pinioned . . . Love:** Swift-winged doves pull the chariot of Venus, goddess of love.

### **G ALLUSION**

What do Juliet's allusions to Venus and to Cupid emphasize about her state of mind as she waits for the nurse to return?

**14 bandy:** toss.

**16 feign as:** act as if.

Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

20 **Nurse.** Peter, stay at the gate.

[Exit Peter.]

**Juliet.** Now, good sweet nurse—O Lord, why lookst thou sad?  
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;  
If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news  
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

25 **Nurse.** I am aweary, give me leave awhile.

Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunce have I had!

**Juliet.** I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.  
Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good nurse, speak.

**Nurse.** Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile?

30 Do you not see that I am out of breath?

**Juliet.** How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath  
To say to me that thou art out of breath?  
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay  
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.

35 Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.

Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.  
Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

**Nurse.** Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how  
to choose a man. Romeo? No, not he. Though his face be better  
40 than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand and a  
foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are  
past compare. He is not the flower of courtesy, but, I'll warrant  
him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench; serve God. What,  
have you dined at home?

45 **Juliet.** No, no. But all this did I know before.

What say he of our marriage? What of that?

**Nurse.** Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!  
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.  
My back o' t'other side—ah, my back, my back!

50 Beshrew your heart for sending me about

To catch my death with jauncing up and down!

**Juliet.** I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.  
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

21–22 The nurse teases Juliet by putting on a sad face as if the news were bad.

25–26 **give me . . . I had:** Leave me alone for a while. I ache all over because of the running back and forth I've been doing.

### Language Coach

**Multiple Meanings** The word *stay* has something other than its usual meaning in line 29. What do you think it means? (Hint: The expression "What haste!" means "What a hurry you're in!")

36 **I'll . . . circumstance:** I'll wait for the details.

38 **simple:** foolish.

50–51 **Beshrew . . . down:** Curse you for making me endanger my health by running around. *Considering the nurse's feelings for Juliet, do you think this is really an angry curse? Explain.*

**Nurse.** Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous,  
55 and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a virtuous—Where  
is your mother?

**Juliet.** Where is my mother? Why, she is within.  
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!  
“Your love says, like an honest gentleman,  
60 ‘Where is your mother?’”

**Nurse.** O God’s Lady dear!  
Are you so hot? Marry come up, I trow.  
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?  
Hence forward do your messages yourself.

**Juliet.** Here’s such a coil! Come, what says Romeo?

65 **Nurse.** Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

**Juliet.** I have.

**Nurse.** Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence’ cell;  
There stays a husband to make you a wife.  
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks:

70 They’ll be in scarlet straight at any news.  
Hie you to church; I must another way,  
To fetch a ladder, by the which your love  
Must climb a bird’s nest soon when it is dark.  
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;

75 But you shall bear the burden soon at night.  
Go; I’ll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

**Juliet.** Hie to high fortune! Honest nurse, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE 6 *Friar Laurence’s cell.*

*Friar Laurence cautions Romeo to be more sensible in his love for Juliet. When she arrives, the two confess their love to each other and prepare to be married by Friar Laurence.*

[*Enter Friar Laurence and Romeo.*]

**Friar Laurence.** So smile the heavens upon this holy act  
That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!

**Romeo.** Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can,  
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy  
5 That one short minute gives me in her sight.  
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,  
Then love-devouring death do what he dare—  
It is enough I may but call her mine.

**61–62 Marry . . . bones:** Control yourself! Is this the treatment I get for my pain?

**64 coil:** fuss.

**67–68 Then hie . . . a wife:** Then go quickly to Friar Laurence’s cell, where Romeo is waiting to marry you.

**71–73** The nurse will get the ladder that Romeo will use to climb to Juliet’s room after they are married.

**1–2 So smile . . . us not:** May heaven so bless this act that we won’t regret it in the future (*after-hours*).

**4 countervail:** outweigh.



**Friar Laurence.** These violent delights have violent ends  
 10 And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,  
 Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey  
 Is loathsome in his own deliciousness  
 And in the taste confounds the appetite.  
 Therefore love moderately: long love doth so;  
 15 Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow. **H**  
 [*Enter Juliet.*]  
 Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot  
 Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.  
 A lover may bstride the gossamer  
 That idles in the wanton summer air,  
 20 And yet not fall; so light is vanity.  
**Juliet.** Good even to my ghostly confessor.  
**Friar Laurence.** Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.  
**Juliet.** As much to him, else is his thanks too much.  
**Romeo.** Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy  
 25 Be heaped like mine, and that thy skill be more  
 To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath  
 This neighbor air, and let rich music's tongue  
 Unfold the imagined happiness that both  
 Receive in either by this dear encounter.  
 30 **Juliet.** Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,  
 Brags of his substance, not of ornament.  
 They are but beggars that can count their worth;  
 But my true love is grown to such excess  
 I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.  
 35 **Friar Laurence.** Come, come with me, and we will make short work;  
 For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
 Till Holy Church incorporate two in one. **I**  
 [*Exeunt.*]

**9–15 These . . . slow:** The friar compares Romeo's passion to gunpowder and the fire that ignites it—both are destroyed—then to honey, whose sweetness can destroy the appetite. He reminds Romeo to practice moderation in love.

**H TRAGEDY**

Consider what you know about Shakespearean tragedy. Do you think Romeo will take the advice Friar Laurence gives him in lines 9–15? Explain.

**18–20 A lover . . . vanity:** A lover can walk across a spider's web (**gossamer**) without falling.

**23 as much to him:** I give the same greeting to Romeo that he offers to me.

**24–29 if the measure . . . encounter:** If you are as happy as I am and have more skill to proclaim it, then sweeten the air by singing of our happiness to the world.

**30–31 Conceit . . . ornament:** True understanding (**conceit**) needs no words.



TEKS 7

**I PARADOX**

A **paradox** is a seemingly contradictory statement that nevertheless expresses a truth. How is the thought expressed by Friar Laurence in line 37 a paradox? Be sure to explain the truth that his statement reveals.

## Comprehension

1. **Recall** Who challenges Romeo to a duel, and why?
2. **Recall** What important message from Romeo does the nurse bring to Juliet?
3. **Clarify** Why does Friar Laurence agree to marry Romeo and Juliet despite his reservations? Explain what he hopes this marriage will accomplish.



**READING 4** Explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text.

**RC-9(A)** Reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension.

## Literary Analysis

4. **Reading Shakespearean Drama** Examine the events you recorded in your chart as you read Act Two. Which events seem most crucial in escalating the **conflicts** in the plot? Explain your answer.
5. **Make Inferences About Character Motives** Why do Romeo and Juliet rush to get married after declaring their love? Support your inference with evidence from the text. Then explain whether you think the young lovers get married too soon, and why or why not.
6. **Analyze Soliloquy and Aside** Identify at least one soliloquy and one aside in Act Two and record them in a chart like the one shown. Complete the chart by explaining what each example reveals about the character speaking.

<i>Scene and Lines</i>	<i>Character Who Speaks</i>	<i>Soliloquy or Aside?</i>	<i>What Is Revealed?</i>
<i>Scene 2, lines 1–25</i>	<i>Romeo</i>		

7. **Analyze Character Development** Compare Romeo’s behavior before he meets Juliet with his behavior after they declare their love for each other. What do you learn about Romeo from the change in his behavior?

## Literary Criticism

8. **Author’s Style** Shakespeare is often praised for his masterly use of **figurative language**, or language that communicates ideas beyond the ordinary, literal meaning of the words. Find two examples of particularly striking figurative language in Act Two and discuss what makes each example effective.

# Act Three

## SCENE 1 *A public place.*

*Act Two ends with the joyful Romeo and Juliet secretly married. Their happiness, however, is about to end abruptly. In this scene, Mercutio, Benvolio, and Romeo meet Tybalt on the street. Tybalt insults Romeo, but Romeo, who has just returned from his wedding, remains calm. Mercutio, on the other hand, is furious with Tybalt, and they begin to fight. As Romeo tries to separate them, Tybalt stabs Mercutio, who later dies. Romeo then challenges Tybalt, kills him, and flees. The prince arrives and demands an explanation. He announces that Romeo will be killed if he does not leave Verona immediately.*

[Enter Mercutio, Benvolio, Page, and Servants.]

**Benvolio.** I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire.  
The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,  
And if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl,  
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

5 **Mercutio.** Thou art like one of those fellows that, when he enters the confines of a tavern, claps me his sword upon the table and says "God send me no need of thee!" and by the operation of the second cup draws him on the drawer, when indeed there is no need.

10 **Benvolio.** Am I like such a fellow?

**Mercutio.** Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy; and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

**Benvolio.** And what to?

15 **Mercutio.** Nay an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou! why, thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes.

20 What eye but such an eye would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat; and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg for quarreling. Thou hast quarreled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst  
25 thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another for tying his new shoes with old riband? And yet thou wilt tutor me from quarreling!

**3–4 we shall . . . stirring:** We shall not avoid a fight, since the heat makes people ill-tempered.

**7–8 by the . . . drawer:** feeling the effects of a second drink, is ready to fight (**draw on**) the waiter who's pouring the drinks (**drawer**).

**12–13 as soon moved . . . to be moved:** as likely to get angry and start a fight.

**15–27** Mercutio teases his friend by insisting that Benvolio is quick to pick a fight, though everyone knows that Benvolio is gentle and peace loving.

**25 doublet:** jacket.

**26 riband:** ribbon or laces.

Mercutio and Tybalt duel in the 2004 coproduction of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Second City.







**Benvolio.** An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

30 **Mercutio.** The fee simple? O simple!

[Enter Tybalt and others.]

**Benvolio.** By my head, here come the Capulets. **A**

**Mercutio.** By my heel, I care not.

**Tybalt.** Follow me close, for I will speak to them. Gentlemen, good den. A word with one of you.

35 **Mercutio.** And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.

**Tybalt.** You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, an you will give me occasion.

**Mercutio.** Could you not take some occasion without giving?

40 **Tybalt.** Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.

**Mercutio.** Consort? What, dost thou make us minstrels? An thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. Zounds, consort!

45 **Benvolio.** We talk here in the public haunt of men.

Either withdraw unto some private place  
And reason coldly of your grievances,  
Or else depart. Here all eyes gaze on us.

**Mercutio.** Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze.

50 I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

[Enter Romeo.]

**Tybalt.** Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.

**Mercutio.** But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery. Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower! Your worship in that sense may call him man.

55 **Tybalt.** Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford  
No better term than this: thou art a villain.

**Romeo.** Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee  
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage  
To such a greeting. Villain am I none.

60 Therefore farewell. I see thou knowst me not. **B**

**Tybalt.** Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries  
That thou hast done me; therefore turn and draw.

**Romeo.** I do protest I never injured thee,  
But love thee better than thou canst devise

**28–29 An I . . . quarter:** If I picked fights as quickly as you do, anybody could own me for the smallest amount of money.

### **A TRAGEDY**

As you read lines 31–79, think about the play's mounting **conflict**. Ask yourself: Who is responsible for starting this sword fight? Cite evidence to support your viewpoint.

**40–44 consortest:** keep company with. Tybalt means "You are friends with Romeo." Mercutio pretends to misunderstand him, assuming that Tybalt is insulting him by calling Romeo and him a **consort**, a group of traveling musicians. He then refers to his sword as his **fiddlestick**, the bow for a fiddle.

**45–48** *What does Benvolio want Tybalt and Mercutio to do?*

**51–54** When Romeo enters, Mercutio again pretends to misunderstand Tybalt. By **my man**, Tybalt means "the man I'm looking for." Mercutio takes it to mean "my servant." (**Livery** is a servant's uniform.) He assures Tybalt that the only place Romeo would follow him is to the dueling field.

**57–59** I forgive your anger because I have reason to love you.

### **B CHARACTER**

What **motive** does Romeo have for not wanting to fight Tybalt? Who else knows about this motive?

**61 boy:** an insulting term of address.

65 Till thou shalt know the reason of my love;  
And so, good Capulet, which name I tender  
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.

**Mercutio.** O calm, dishonorable, vile submission!  
*Alla stoccata* carries it away.

[*draws*]

70 Tybalt, you ratcatcher, will you walk?

**Tybalt.** What wouldst thou have with me?

**Mercutio.** Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.  
That I mean to make bold withal, and, as you shall use me  
hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight. Will you pluck your  
75 sword out of his pilcher by the ears? Make haste, lest mine be  
about your ears ere it be out.

**Tybalt.** I am for you.

[*draws*]

**Romeo.** Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

**Mercutio.** Come, sir, your *passado*!

[*They fight.*]

80 **Romeo.** Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons.  
Gentlemen, for shame! forbear this outrage!  
Tybalt, Mercutio, the Prince expressly hath  
Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.  
Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

[*Tybalt, under Romeo's arm, thrusts Mercutio in, and flies with  
his Men.*]

**Mercutio.** I am hurt.

85 A plague o' both your houses! I am sped.  
Is he gone and hath nothing?

**Benvolio.** What, art thou hurt?

**Mercutio.** Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch. Marry, 'tis enough.  
Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[*Exit Page.*]

**Romeo.** Courage, man. The hurt cannot be much.

90 **Mercutio.** No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church  
door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow, and you  
shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this  
world. A plague o' both your houses! Zounds, a dog, a rat, a  
mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! A braggart, a rogue, a

**66 tender:** cherish.

**68–70** Mercutio assumes that Romeo is afraid to fight. *Alla stoccata* is a move used in sword fighting; Mercutio is suggesting that Tybalt has won the battle of words with Romeo. Mercutio then dares Tybalt to step aside and fight (**walk**).

**72–74 nothing but . . . eight:** I intend to take one of your nine lives (as a cat supposedly has) and give a beating to the other eight.

**79 *passado*:** a sword-fighting maneuver.

**80–84** Romeo wants Benvolio to help him stop the fight. They are able to hold back Mercutio.

**83 bandying:** fighting.

**85 A plague . . . sped:** I curse both the Montagues and the Capulets. I am destroyed.

**90–96** Even as he lies dying, Mercutio continues to joke and make nasty remarks about Tybalt. He makes a pun on the word *grave*.

95 villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

**Romeo.** I thought all for the best.

**Mercutio.** Help me into some house, Benvolio,  
Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses! **C**

100 They have made worms' meat of me. I have it,  
And soundly too. Your houses!

[*Exit, supported by Benvolio.*]

**Romeo.** This gentleman, the Prince's near ally,  
My very friend, hath got this mortal hurt  
In my behalf—my reputation stained  
105 With Tybalt's slander—Tybalt, that an hour  
Hath been my kinsman, O sweet Juliet,  
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate  
And in my temper softened valor's steel!

[*Reenter Benvolio.*]

**Benvolio.** O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!  
110 That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,  
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

**Romeo.** This day's black fate on mo days doth depend;  
This but begins the woe others must end.

[*Reenter Tybalt.*]

**Benvolio.** Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

115 **Romeo.** Alive in triumph, and Mercutio slain?  
Away to heaven respective lenity,  
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!  
Now, Tybalt, take the "villain" back again  
That late thou gavest me, for Mercutio's soul  
120 Is but a little way above our heads,  
Staying for thine to keep him company.  
Either thou or I, or both, must go with him. **D**

**Tybalt.** Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,  
Shalt with him hence.

**Romeo.** This shall determine that.

[*They fight. Tybalt falls.*]

125 **Benvolio.** Romeo, away, be gone!  
The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.  
Stand not amazed. The Prince will doom thee death  
If thou art taken. Hence, be gone, away!

### **C TRAGEDY**

What curse does Mercutio repeat three times in this scene? Explain what this ominous curse might foreshadow.

**102–108 This gentleman . . . valor's steel:** My friend has died protecting my reputation against a man who has been my relative for only an hour. My love for Juliet has made me less manly and brave.

**110 aspired:** soared to.

**112–113 This day's . . . must end:** This awful day will be followed by more of the same.

**116 respective lenity:** considerate mildness.

### **D CHARACTER**

What drives Romeo to challenge Tybalt to fight?

**124** The sword fight probably goes on for several minutes, till Romeo runs his sword through Tybalt.

**Romeo.** O, I am fortune's fool!

**Benvolio.** Why dost thou stay?

[Exit Romeo.]

[Enter Citizens.]

130 **Citizen.** Which way ran he that killed Mercutio?

Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

**Benvolio.** There lies that Tybalt.

**Citizen.** Up, sir, go with me.

I charge thee in the Prince's name obey.

[Enter Prince with his Attendants, Montague, Capulet, their Wives, and others.]

**Prince.** Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

135 **Benvolio.** O noble Prince, I can discover all

The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl.

There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,

That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

**Lady Capulet.** Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child!

140 O Prince! O cousin! O husband! O, the blood is spilled

Of my dear kinsman! Prince, as thou art true,

For blood of ours shed blood of Montague.

O cousin, cousin!

**Prince.** Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

145 **Benvolio.** Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.

Romeo, that spoke him fair, bid him bethink

How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal

Your high displeasure. All this—uttered

With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed—

150 Could not take truce with the unruly spleen

Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts

With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast;

Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,

And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats

155 Cold death aside and with the other sends

It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity

Retorts it. Romeo he cries aloud,

“Hold, friends! friends, part!” and swifter than his tongue,

His agile arm beats down their fatal points,

160 And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm

An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life

129 **I am fortune's fool:** Fate has made a fool of me.

135–136 **Benvolio** says he can tell (**discover**) what happened.

141–142 **as thou . . . Montague:** If your word is good, you will sentence Romeo to death for killing a Capulet.

146–147 **Romeo, that . . . was:** Romeo talked calmly (**fair**) and told Tybalt to think how trivial (**nice**) the argument was.

150–151 **could . . . peace:** could not quiet the anger of Tybalt, who would not listen to pleas for peace.

156–157 **whose dexterity retorts it:** whose skill returns it.

159–160 **his agile . . . rushes:** He rushed between them and pushed down their swords.



Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled,  
But by-and-by comes back to Romeo,  
Who had but newly entertained revenge,  
165 And to't they go like lightning; for, ere I  
Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain;  
And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.  
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

**Lady Capulet.** He is a kinsman to the Montague;  
170 Affection makes him false, he speaks not true.  
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,  
And all those twenty could but kill one life.  
I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must give.  
Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live. **E**

175 **Prince.** Romeo slew him; he slew Mercutio.  
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

**Montague.** Not Romeo, Prince; he was Mercutio's friend;  
His fault concludes but what the law should end,  
The life of Tybalt.

164 **entertained:** thought of.

**E TRAGEDY**

Why does Lady Capulet think Benvolio is lying? **Paraphrase** the accusation she makes, and explain what she begs the prince to do.

178–179 Romeo is guilty only of avenging Mercutio's death, which the law would have done anyway.



Lady Capulet mourns Tybalt in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2004 production.

**Prince.** And for that offense  
 180 Immediately we do exile him hence.  
 I have an interest in your hate's proceeding,  
 My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;  
 But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine  
 That you shall all repent the loss of mine.  
 185 I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;  
 Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses.  
 Therefore use none. Let Romeo hence in haste,  
 Else, when he is found, that hour is his last.  
 Bear hence this body, and attend our will.  
 190 Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.  
 [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE 2 *Capulet's orchard.*

*The scene begins with Juliet impatiently waiting for night to come so that Romeo can climb to her bedroom on the rope ladder. Suddenly the nurse enters with the terrible news of Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment. Juliet mourns for the loss of her cousin and her husband and threatens to kill herself. To calm her, the nurse promises to find Romeo and bring him to Juliet before he leaves Verona.*

[*Enter Juliet alone.*]

**Juliet.** Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
 Toward Phoebus' lodging! Such a wagoner  
 As Phaëton would whip you to the West,  
 And bring in cloudy night immediately.  
 5 Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
 That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo  
 Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen. **F**  
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites  
 By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,  
 10 It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,  
 Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,  
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,  
 Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.  
 Hood my unmanned blood bating in my cheeks  
 15 With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,  
 Think true love acted simple modesty.  
 Come, night; come, Romeo, come; thou day in night;  
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
 Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.  
 20 Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-browed night;  
 Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,  
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,

**179–190** The prince banishes Romeo from Verona. He angrily points out that one of his own relatives is dead because of the feud and declares that Romeo will be put to death unless he flees immediately.

### Language Coach

**Etymology** The word *amerce* (line 183), meaning “punish,” is rare today. It comes from the Old French phrase *a merci*, which means “completely in the power of.” What common English word in line 190 is also related to this French expression?

**2–3 Phoebus:** Apollo, the god of the sun;  
**Phaëton:** a mortal who lost control of the sun's chariot when he drove it too fast.

**F ALLUSION**  
 Paraphrase lines 1–7. Why does Juliet allude to Phoebus and Phaëton in this **soliloquy**?

**14–16 Hood . . . modesty:** Juliet asks that the darkness hide her blushing cheeks on her wedding night.

And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
 That all the world will be in love with night  
 25 And pay no worship to the garish sun.  
 O, I have bought the mansion of a love,  
 But not possessed it; and though I am sold,  
 Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day  
 As is the night before some festival  
 30 To an impatient child that hath new robes  
 And may not wear them. Oh, here comes my nurse,  
 [*Enter Nurse, wringing her hands, with the ladder of cords in her lap.*]  
 And she brings news; and every tongue that speaks  
 But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.  
 Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the cords  
 35 That Romeo bid thee fetch?

**Nurse.** Ay, ay, the cords.

**Juliet.** Ay me! what news? Why dost thou wring thy hands?

**Nurse.** Ah, well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!  
 We are undone, lady, we are undone!  
 Alack the day! he's gone, he's killed, he's dead!

40 **Juliet.** Can heaven be so envious? **G**

**Nurse.** Romeo can,  
 Though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo!  
 Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!

**Juliet.** What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?  
 This torture should be roared in dismal hell.

45 Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but "I,"  
 And that bare vowel "I" shall poison more  
 Than the death-darting eye of a cockatrice.  
 I am not I, if there be such an "I,"  
 Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer "I."

50 If he be slain, say "I," or if not, "no."  
 Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe.

**Nurse.** I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,  
 (God save the mark!) here on his manly breast.

A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse;  
 55 Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood,  
 All in gore blood. I swounded at the sight.

**Juliet.** O, break, my heart! poor bankrout, break at once!  
 To prison, eyes; ne'er look on liberty!

Vile earth, to earth resign; end motion here,  
 60 And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier!

**26–27 I have . . . possessed it:** Juliet protests that she has gone through the wedding ceremony (**bought the mansion**) but is still waiting to enjoy the rewards of marriage.

**34 the cords:** the rope ladder.

**37–42 well-a-day:** an expression used when someone has bad news. The nurse wails and moans without clearly explaining what has happened, leading Juliet to assume that Romeo is dead.

### **G DRAMATIC IRONY**

How is Juliet's belief that her new husband is dead an example of dramatic irony?

**45–50 Juliet's "I" means "aye," or "yes." A cockatrice is a mythological beast whose glance kills its victims.**

**51 my weal or woe:** my happiness or sorrow.

**53–56 God . . . mark:** an expression meant to scare off evil powers, similar to "Knock on wood"; **corse:** corpse; **swounded:** fainted.

**57–60 Juliet say her heart is broken and bankrupt (**bankrout**). She wants to be buried with Romeo, sharing his burial platform (**bier**).**

**Nurse.** O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!  
O courteous Tybalt! honest gentleman!  
That ever I should live to see thee dead!

**Juliet.** What storm is this that blows so contrary?  
65 Is Romeo slaughtered, and is Tybalt dead?  
My dear-loved cousin, and my dearer lord?  
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom!  
For who is living, if those two are gone?

**Nurse.** Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished;  
70 Romeo that killed him, he is banished.

**Juliet.** O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

**Nurse.** It did! it did! alas the day, it did!

**Juliet.** O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!  
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
75 Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!  
Dove-feathered raven! wolvis-ravens lamb!  
Despised substance of divinest show!  
Just opposite to what thou justly seemst,  
A damned saint, an honorable villain!  
80 O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell  
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend  
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?  
Was ever book containing such vile matter  
So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell  
85 In such a gorgeous palace!

**Nurse.** There's no trust,  
No faith, no honesty in men; all perjured,  
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.  
Ah, where's my man? Give me some aqua vitae.  
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.  
90 Shame come to Romeo!

**Juliet.** Blistered be thy tongue  
For such a wish! He was not born to shame.  
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;  
For 'tis a throne where honor may be crowned  
Sole monarch of the universal earth.

95 O, what a beast was I to chide at him! **H**

**Nurse.** Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?

**Juliet.** Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?  
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name  
When I, thy three-hours' wife, have mangled it?  
100 But wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?  
That villain cousin would have killed my husband.

**73–85** Juliet's contradictory phrases here show her conflicting feelings about the events the nurse has described. *What is Juliet's first reaction to the news that Romeo has killed Tybalt?*

**81 bower . . . fiend:** give a home to the spirit of a demon.

**87 all . . . dissemblers:** All are liars and pretenders.

**88 aqua vitae:** brandy.

### **H TRAGEDY**

Compare Juliet's initial reaction to the news of Tybalt's death with her response to the nurse in lines 90–95. What **internal conflict** is Juliet wrestling with in this scene?



Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring!  
 Your tributary drops belong to woe,  
 Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.  
 105 My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;  
 And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband.  
 All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?  
 Some word there was, worsser than Tybalt's death,  
 That murdered me. I would forget it fain;  
 110 But O, it presses to my memory  
 Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds!  
 "Tybalt is dead, and Romeo—banished."  
 That "banished," that one word "banished,"  
 Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death  
 115 Was woe enough, if it had ended there;  
 Or, if sour woe delights in fellowship  
 And needly will be ranked with other griefs,  
 Why followed not, when she said "Tybalt's dead,"  
 Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,  
 120 Which modern lamentation might have moved?  
 But with a rearward following Tybalt's death,  
 "Romeo is banished"—to speak that word  
 Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,  
 All slain, all dead. "Romeo is banished"—  
 125 There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,  
 In that word's death; no words can that woe sound.  
 Where is my father and my mother, nurse?  
**Nurse.** Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse.  
 Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.  
 130 **Juliet.** Wash they his wounds with tears? Mine shall be spent,  
 When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.  
 Take up those cords. Poor ropes, you are beguiled,  
 Both you and I, for Romeo is exiled.  
 He made you for a highway to my bed;  
 135 But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.  
 Come, cords; come, nurse. I'll to my wedding bed;  
 And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!  
**Nurse.** Hie to your chamber. I'll find Romeo  
 To comfort you. I wot well where he is.  
 140 Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night.  
 I'll to him; he is hid at Laurence' cell.  
**Juliet.** O, find him! give this ring to my true knight  
 And bid him come to take his last farewell.  
 [*Exeunt.*]

**102–106** Juliet is uncertain whether her tears should be of joy or of sorrow.

**114–127** Juliet says that if the news of Tybalt's death had been followed by the news of her parents' deaths, she would have felt normal (**modern**), or expected, grief. To follow the story of Tybalt's death with the terrible news of Romeo's banishment creates a sorrow so deep it cannot be expressed in words.

**132 beguiled:** cheated.

**135–137 I . . . maidenhead:** I will die a widow without ever really having been a wife. Death, not Romeo, will be my husband.

**139 wot:** know.

### SCENE 3 *Friar Laurence's cell.*

*Friar Laurence tells Romeo of his banishment, and Romeo collapses in grief. When he learns from the nurse that Juliet, too, is in despair, he threatens to stab himself. The friar reacts by suggesting a plan. Romeo is to spend a few hours with Juliet and then escape to Mantua. While he is away, the friar will announce the wedding and try to get a pardon from the prince.*

[Enter Friar Laurence.]

**Friar Laurence.** Romeo, come forth; come forth, thou fearful man.  
Affliction is enamored of thy parts,  
And thou art wedded to calamity.

**2 affliction . . . parts:** Trouble loves you.

[Enter Romeo.]

**Romeo.** Father, what news? What is the Prince's doom?

**4 doom:** sentence.

5 What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand  
That I yet know not?

**Friar Laurence.** Too familiar  
Is my dear son with such sour company.  
I bring thee tidings of the Prince's doom.

**Romeo.** What less than doomsday is the Prince's doom?

**9 doomsday:** death.

10 **Friar Laurence.** A gentler judgment vanished from his lips—  
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

**10 vanished:** came.

**Romeo.** Ha, banishment? Be merciful, say "death";  
For exile hath more terror in his look,  
Much more than death. Do not say "banishment."

15 **Friar Laurence.** Hence from Verona art thou banished.  
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

**Romeo.** There is no world without Verona walls,  
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.

**17–23 There is . . . murders me:** Being exiled outside Verona's walls is as bad as being dead. And yet you smile at my misfortune.

Hence banished is banish'd from the world,  
20 And world's exile is death. Then "banishment,"  
Is death misterm'd. Calling death "banishment,"  
Thou cuttst my head off with a golden axe  
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

**Friar Laurence.** O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!

25 Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind Prince,  
Taking thy part, hath rushed aside the law,  
And turned that black word death to banishment.  
This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not.

**24–28** The angry friar reminds Romeo that by law he should have gotten the death penalty. The prince has shown Romeo mercy.

30 **Romeo.** 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here,  
Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog  
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,  
Live here in heaven and may look on her;  
But Romeo may not. More validity,

More honorable state, more courtship lives  
 35 In carrion flies than Romeo. They may seize  
 On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand  
 And steal immortal blessing from her lips,  
 Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,  
 Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin;  
 40 But Romeo may not—he is banished.  
 This may flies do, when I from this must fly;  
 They are free men, but I am banished.  
 And sayst thou yet that exile is not death?  
 Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,  
 45 No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,  
 But "banished" to kill me—"banished"?  
 O friar, the damned use that word in hell;  
 Howling attends it! How hast thou the heart,  
 Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,  
 50 A sin-absolver, and my friend professed,  
 To mangle me with that word "banished"?

**Friar Laurence.** Thou fond mad man, hear me a little speak.

**Romeo.** O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

**Friar Laurence.** I'll give thee armor to keep off that word;  
 55 Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,  
 To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

**Romeo.** Yet "banished"? Hang up philosophy!  
 Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,  
 Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom,  
 60 It helps not, it prevails not. Talk no more.

**Friar Laurence.** O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

**Romeo.** How should they, when that wise men have no eyes?

**Friar Laurence.** Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.

**Romeo.** Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.  
 65 Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,  
 An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,  
 Doting like me, and like me banished,  
 Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,  
 And fall upon the ground, as I do now,  
 70 Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

[Nurse *knocks within.*]

**Friar Laurence.** Arise; one knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.

**Romeo.** Not I; unless the breath of heartsick groans  
 Mist-like infold me from the search of eyes.

[*knock*]

**33–35 More validity . . . than Romeo:**  
 Even flies that live off the dead (**carrion**)  
 will be able to get closer to Juliet than  
 Romeo will.

**44–46 Hadst . . . to kill me:** Couldn't  
 you have killed me with poison or a  
 knife instead of with that awful word  
*banished*? *Why does Romeo think*  
*banishment is a worse punishment*  
*than death?*

**52 fond:** foolish.

**54–56** The friar offers philosophical  
 comfort and counseling (**adversity's sweet**  
**milk**) as a way to overcome hardship.

**63 dispute:** discuss; **estate:** situation.

**72–73** Romeo will hide only if his sighs  
 create a mist and shield him from sight.

**Friar Laurence.** Hark, how they knock! Who's there? Romeo, arise;  
75 Thou wilt be taken.—Stay awhile!—Stand up;

[*knock*]

Run to my study.—By-and-by!—God's will,  
What simpleness is this.—I come, I come!

[*knock*]

Who knocks so hard? Whence come you? What's your will?

**Nurse** [*within*]. Let me come in, and you shall know my errand.  
80 I come from Lady Juliet.

**Friar Laurence.** Welcome then.

[*Enter Nurse.*]

**Nurse.** O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,  
Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo?

**Friar Laurence.** There on the ground, with his own tears made  
drunk.

**Nurse.** O, he is even in my mistress' case,  
85 Just in her case! O woeful sympathy!  
Piteous predicament! Even so lies she,  
Blubb'ring and weeping, weeping and blubbering.  
Stand up, stand up! Stand, an you be a man.  
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand!  
90 Why should you fall into so deep an O?

**Romeo** [*rises*]. Nurse—

**Nurse.** Ah sir! ah sir! Well, death's the end of all.

**Romeo.** Spakest thou of Juliet? How is it with her?  
Doth not she think me an old murderer,  
95 Now I have stained the childhood of our joy  
With blood removed but little from her own?  
Where is she? and how doth she? and what says  
My concealed lady to our canceled love?

**Nurse.** O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps;  
100 And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,  
And Tybalt calls; and then on Romeo cries,  
And then down falls again.

**Romeo.** As if that name,  
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,  
Did murder her; as that name's cursed hand  
105 Murdered her kinsman. O tell me, friar, tell me,  
In what vile part of this anatomy  
Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack  
The hateful mansion.

[*draws his dagger*]

**84–85 he is even . . . her case:** He is acting the same way that Juliet is.

**90 into so deep an O:** into such deep grief.

**96 blood . . . from her own:** the blood of a close relative of hers.

**98 concealed lady:** secret bride.

**102 that name:** the name Romeo.

**106–108 in what vile part . . . mansion:** Romeo asks where in his body (**anatomy**) his name can be found so that he can cut the name out. [What is Romeo about to do?](#)



**Friar Laurence.** Hold thy desperate hand.  
 Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art;  
 110 Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote  
 The unreasonable fury of a beast.  
 Unseemly woman in a seeming man!  
 Or ill-beseeming beast in seeming both!  
 Thou hast amazed me. By my holy order,  
 115 I thought thy disposition better tempered.  
 Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself?  
 And slay thy lady too that lives in thee,  
 By doing damned hate upon thyself?  
 Why railst thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?  
 120 Since birth and heaven and earth, all three do meet  
 In thee at once; which thou at once wouldst lose.  
 Fie, fie, thou shamest thy shape, thy love, thy wit,  
 Which, like a usurer, aboundst in all,  
 And usest none in that true use indeed  
 125 Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.  
 Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,  
 Digressing from the valor of a man;  
 Thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,  
 Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish;  
 130 Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,  
 Misshapen in the conduct of them both,  
 Like powder in a skillless soldier's flask,  
 Is set afire by thine own ignorance,  
 And thou dismembered with thine own defense.  
 135 What, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive,  
 For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead.  
 There art thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,  
 But thou slewest Tybalt. There art thou happy.  
 The law, that threatened death, becomes thy friend  
 140 And turns it to exile. There art thou happy.  
 A pack of blessings light upon thy back;  
 Happiness courts thee in her best array;  
 But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,  
 Thou poutst upon thy fortune and thy love.  
 145 Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.  
 Go get thee to thy love, as was decreed,  
 Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her.  
 But look thou stay not till the watch be set,  
 For then thou canst not pass to Mantua,  
 150 Where thou shalt live till we can find a time  
 To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,  
 Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back  
 With twenty hundred thousand times more joy

**108–125 Hold thy . . . bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit:** You're not acting like a man. Would you send your soul to hell by committing suicide (**doing damned hate upon thyself**)? Why do you curse your birth, heaven, and earth? You are refusing to make good use of your advantages, just as a miser refuses to spend his money.

**126–134** The friar explains how by acting as he is, Romeo is misusing his shape (his outer form or body), his love, and his wit (his mind or intellect).

**135–140** The friar tells Romeo to count his blessings instead of feeling sorry for himself. He lists the things Romeo has to be thankful for. *What three blessings does the friar mention?*

## Language Coach

**Multiple Meanings** The words *court* and *array* (line 142) both have multiple meanings. Here, *courts* means “woos”; try to figure out the meaning here of *array*.

**148–149 look . . . Mantua:** Leave before the guards take their places at the city gates; otherwise you will not be able to escape to Mantua.

**151 blaze . . . friends:** announce your marriage and get the families (**friends**) to stop feuding.

Than thou wentst forth in lamentation.  
155 Go before, nurse. Commend me to thy lady,  
And bid her hasten all the house to bed,  
Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto.  
Romeo is coming.

**Nurse.** O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night  
160 To hear good counsel. O, what learning is!  
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

**Romeo.** Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.  
[Nurse *offers to go and turns again.*]

**Nurse.** Here is a ring she bid me give you, sir.  
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.  
[*Exit.*]

165 **Romeo.** How well my comfort is revived by this!

**Friar Laurence.** Go hence; good night; and here stands all your  
state:

Either be gone before the watch be set,  
Or by the break of day disguised from hence.  
Sojourn in Mantua. I'll find out your man,  
170 And he shall signify from time to time  
Every good hap to you that chances here.  
Give me thy hand. 'Tis late. Farewell; good night.

**Romeo.** But that a joy past joy calls out on me,  
It were a grief so brief to part with thee.

175 Farewell. ❶

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE 4 *Capulet's house.*

*In this scene, Paris visits the Capulets, who are mourning the death of Tybalt. He says he realizes that this is no time to talk of marriage. Capulet, however, disagrees; he decides that Juliet should marry Paris on Thursday, three days away. He tells Lady Capulet to inform Juliet immediately.*

[*Enter Capulet, Lady Capulet, and Paris.*]

**Capulet.** Things have fall'n out, sir, so unluckily  
That we have had no time to move our daughter.  
Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,  
And so did I. Well, we were born to die.

5 'Tis very late; she'll not come down tonight.

**162 bid . . . chide:** Tell Juliet to get ready to scold me for the way I've behaved.

**166–171 and here . . . here:** This is what your fate depends on: either leave before the night watchmen go on duty, or get out at dawn in a disguise. Stay awhile in Mantua. I'll find your servant and send messages to you about what good things are happening here.

### ❶ TRAGEDY

Despite Romeo and Juliet's anguish, their problem at this point seems solvable. **Summarize** the plan that has been made to resolve their dilemma.

**1–2 Things have . . . our daughter:** Such terrible things have happened that we haven't had time to persuade (**move**) Juliet to think about your marriage proposal.

I promise you, but for your company,  
I would have been abed an hour ago.

**Paris.** These times of woe afford no time to woo.  
Madam, good night. Commend me to your daughter.

10 **Lady Capulet.** I will, and know her mind early tomorrow;  
Tonight she's mew'd up to her heaviness.

[Paris offers to go and Capulet calls him again.]

**Capulet.** Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender  
Of my child's love. I think she will be ruled  
In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not.

15 Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed;  
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love  
And bid her (mark you me?) on Wednesday next—  
But, soft! what day is this?

**Paris.** Monday, my lord.

**Capulet.** Monday! ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon.

20 A Thursday let it be—a Thursday, tell her,  
She shall be married to this noble earl.

Will you be ready? Do you like this haste?  
We'll keep no great ado—a friend or two;

For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,  
25 It may be thought we held him carelessly,  
Being our kinsman, if we revel much.

Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,  
And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

**Paris.** My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

30 **Capulet.** Well, get you gone. A Thursday be it then. ❶

Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed;  
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day.

Farewell, my lord.—Light to my chamber, ho!  
Afore me, it is so very very late

35 That we may call it early by-and-by.  
Good night.

[Exeunt.]

8 Sad times are not good times for talking of marriage.

11 Tonight she is locked up with her sorrow. *What do Juliet's parents think is causing this sorrow?*

12 **desperate tender:** bold offer.

16 Capulet is so sure that Juliet will accept Paris that he calls Paris “son” already.

23 **no great ado:** no big festivity.

## ❶ TRAGEDY

Predict how Juliet will react to the news that her parents have promised her to Paris. How might this turn of events add to the play's mounting **conflict**?

34–35 **it is . . . by-and-by:** It's so late at night that soon we'll be calling it early in the morning.



## Behind the Curtain

The Clarence Brown Theatre's 2003 production



The Seattle Repertory Theatre's 2003 production



The Bolshoi Ballet's 2004 production



### Stage Combat

A character's movements can convey as much as his or her words. In fight scenes, **blocking** is used to decide exactly how the actors will move. From a stylistic point of view, how are the movements captured in these photographs different? Which fight looks most realistic, and why?



## SCENE 5 *Capulet's orchard.*

*Romeo and Juliet have spent the night together, but before daylight, Romeo leaves for Mantua. As soon as he leaves, Lady Capulet comes in to tell Juliet of her father's decision—that she will marry Count Paris on Thursday. Juliet is very upset and refuses to go along with the plan. Juliet's father goes into a rage at her disobedience and tells her that she will marry Paris or he will disown her.*

*The nurse advises Juliet to wed Paris, since her marriage to Romeo is over and Paris is a better man anyway. Juliet, now angry with the nurse, decides to go to Friar Laurence for help.*

[Enter Romeo and Juliet above, at the window.]

**Juliet.** Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.  
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear.  
Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree.

5 Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

**Romeo.** It was the lark, the herald of the morn;  
No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East.  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day

10 Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.  
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

**Juliet.** Yond light is not daylight; I know it, I.

It is some meteor that the sun exhales  
To be to thee this night a torchbearer

15 And light thee on thy way to Mantua.

Therefore stay yet; thou needst not to be gone.

**Romeo.** Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death.

I am content, so thou wilt have it so.

I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,

20 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;

Nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat

The vaulty heaven so high above our heads.

I have more care to stay than will to go.

Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.

25 How is't, my soul? Let's talk; it is not day.

**Juliet.** It is, it is! Hie hence, be gone, away!

It is the lark that sings so out of tune,

Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.

Some say the lark makes sweet division;

30 This doth not so, for she divideth us.

Some say the lark and loathed toad changed eyes;

O, now I would they had changed voices too,

**2 It was . . . lark:** The nightingale sings at night; the lark sings in the morning. *What is Juliet trying to get Romeo to believe?*

**9 night's candles:** stars.

**12–25** Juliet continues to pretend it is night to keep Romeo from leaving. Romeo gives in and says he'll stay if Juliet wishes it, even if staying means death.

**20 reflex of Cynthia's brow:** reflection of the moon. Cynthia is another name for Diana, the Roman goddess of the moon. She was often pictured with a crescent moon on her forehead.

**26** Romeo's mention of death frightens Juliet, and she urges him to leave quickly.

**29 division:** melody.

**31–34** I wish the lark had the voice of the hated (**loathed**) toad, since its voice is frightening us apart and acting as a morning song for hunters (**hunt's-up**).

Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day!  
35 O, now be gone! More light and light it grows.

**Romeo.** More light and light—more dark and dark our woes!

[*Enter Nurse, hastily.*]

**Nurse.** Madam!

**Juliet.** Nurse?

**Nurse.** Your lady mother is coming to your chamber.  
40 The day is broke; be wary, look about.

[*Exit.*]

**Juliet.** Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

**Romeo.** Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend.

[*He starts down the ladder.*]

**Juliet.** Art thou gone so, my lord, my love, my friend?  
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
45 For in a minute there are many days.

O, by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I again behold my Romeo!

**Romeo.** Farewell!

I will omit no opportunity  
50 That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

**Juliet.** O, thinkst thou we shall ever meet again?

**Romeo.** I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve  
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

**Juliet.** O God, I have an ill-divining soul!  
55 Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,  
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.  
Either my eyesight fails, or thou lookst pale.

**Romeo.** And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.  
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu! adieu!

[*Exit.*]

60 **Juliet.** O Fortune, Fortune! all men call thee fickle.  
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him  
That is renowned for faith? Be fickle, Fortune,  
For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long  
But send him back.

**Lady Capulet** [*within*]. Ho, daughter! are you up?

65 **Juliet.** Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.  
Is she not down so late, or up so early?  
What unaccustomed cause procures her hither?

## Language Coach

**Etymology** A word's **etymology** is its history. The word *affray* (line 33) is an archaic (outdated) verb that comes from the Middle English word *affraien*, meaning "to frighten." What common English adjective comes from this same Middle English word?

46 **much in years:** very old.

54–56 **I have . . . tomb:** Juliet sees an evil vision of the future. *What is her vision?*

59 **Dry . . . blood:** People believed that sorrow drained the blood from the heart, causing a sad person to look pale.

60–62 **fickle:** changeable in loyalty or affection. Juliet asks fickle Fortune why it has anything to do with Romeo, who is the opposite of fickle.

67 **What . . . hither:** What unusual reason brings her here?

[Enter Lady Capulet.]

**Lady Capulet.** Why, how now, Juliet?

**Juliet.** Madam, I am not well.

**Lady Capulet.** Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?

70 **What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?**

An if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live.

Therefore have done. Some grief shows much of love;

But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

**Juliet.** Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

75 **Lady Capulet.** So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend

Which you weep for.

**Juliet.** Feeling so the loss,

I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

**Lady Capulet.** Well, girl, thou weepst not so much for his death

As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.

80 **Juliet.** What villain, madam?

**Lady Capulet.** That same villain Romeo.

**Juliet** [*aside*]. Villain and he be many miles asunder.—

God pardon him! I do, with all my heart;

And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

**Lady Capulet.** That is because the traitor murderer lives.

85 **Juliet.** Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands.

Would none but I might venge my cousin's death!

**Lady Capulet.** We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not.

Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,

Where that same banished runagate doth live,

90 Shall give him such an unaccustomed dram

That he shall soon keep Tybalt company;

And then I hope thou wilt be satisfied.

**Juliet.** Indeed I never shall be satisfied

With Romeo till I behold him—dead—

95 Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vexed.

Madam, if you could find out but a man

To bear a poison, I would temper it;

That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,

Soon sleep in quiet. O, how my heart abhors

100 To hear him named and cannot come to him,

To wreak the love I bore my cousin Tybalt

Upon his body that hath slaughtered him!

**Lady Capulet.** Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.

But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

69–70 *What does Lady Capulet think Juliet is crying about?*

72–73 **have . . . wit:** Stop crying (**have done**). A little grief is evidence of love, while too much grief shows a lack of good sense (**want of wit**).

81–102 In these lines Juliet's words have double meanings. To avoid lying to her mother, she chooses her words carefully. They can mean what her mother wants to hear—or what Juliet really has on her mind.

89 **runagate:** runaway.

90 **unaccustomed dram:** poison.

93–102 **Dead** could refer either to Romeo or to Juliet's heart. Juliet says that if her mother could find someone to carry a poison to Romeo, she would mix (**temper**) it herself.

105 **Juliet.** And joy comes well in such a needy time.  
What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

**Lady Capulet.** Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child;  
One who, to put thee from thy heaviness,  
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy

110 That thou expects not nor I looked not for.

**Juliet.** Madam, in happy time! What day is that?

**Lady Capulet.** Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn  
The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,  
The County Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,

115 Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

**Juliet.** Now by Saint Peter's Church, and Peter too,  
He shall not make me there a joyful bride!  
I wonder at this haste, that I must wed  
Ere he that should be husband comes to woo.

120 I pray you tell my lord and father, madam,  
I will not marry yet; and when I do, I swear  
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,  
Rather than Paris. These are news indeed!

**Lady Capulet.** Here comes your father. Tell him so yourself,

125 And see how he will take it at your hands.

[*Enter Capulet and Nurse.*]

**Capulet.** When the sun sets the air doth drizzle dew,  
But for the sunset of my brother's son  
It rains downright.

How now? a conduit, girl? What, still in tears?

130 Evermore show'ring? In one little body  
Thou counterfeitst a bark, a sea, a wind:  
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,  
Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,  
Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs,

135 Who, raging with thy tears and they with them,  
Without a sudden calm will overset  
Thy tempest-tossed body. How now, wife?  
Have you delivered to her our decree?

**Lady Capulet.** Ay, sir; but she will none, she gives you thanks.

140 I would the fool were married to her grave!

**Capulet.** Soft! take me with you, take me with you, wife.  
How? Will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?  
Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blest,  
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought

145 So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

**121–123** Juliet mentions Romeo to show her mother how strongly opposed she is to marrying Paris, yet what she really means is that she loves Romeo.

**127 the sunset . . . son:** the death of Tybalt.

**129–137 conduit:** fountain. Capulet compares Juliet to a boat (**bark**), an ocean, and the wind because of her excessive crying.

**141 take me with you:** let me understand you.



**Juliet.** Not proud you have, but thankful that you have.  
Proud can I never be of what I hate,  
But thankful even for hate that is meant love.

**Capulet.** How, how, how, how, choplogic? What is this?  
150 “Proud”—and “I thank you”—and “I thank you not”—  
And yet “not proud”? Mistress minion you,  
Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,  
But fettle your fine joints ’gainst Thursday next  
To go with Paris to Saint Peter’s Church,  
155 Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.  
Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage!  
You tallow-face!

**Lady Capulet.** Fie, fie; what, are you mad?

**Juliet.** Good father, I beseech you on my knees,  
[*She kneels down.*]  
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

160 **Capulet.** Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch!  
I tell thee what—get thee to church a Thursday  
Or never after look me in the face.  
Speak not, reply not, do not answer me!  
My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest  
165 That God had lent us but this only child;  
But now I see this one is one too much,  
And that we have a curse in having her.  
Out on her, hilding!

**Nurse.** God in heaven bless her!  
You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

170 **Capulet.** And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,  
Good Prudence. Smatter with your gossips, go!

**Nurse.** I speak no treason.

**Capulet.** O, God-i-god-en!

**Nurse.** May not one speak?

**Capulet.** Peace, you mumbling fool!  
Utter your gravity o’er a gossip’s bowl,  
175 For here we need it not.

**Lady Capulet.** You are too hot.

**Capulet.** God’s bread! it makes me mad. Day, night, late, early,  
At home, abroad, alone, in company,  
Waking or sleeping, still my care hath been  
To have her matched; and having now provided  
180 A gentleman of princely parentage,

**146–148 Not proud . . . meant love:**  
I’m not pleased, but I am grateful for  
your intentions.

**149–157** In his rage, Capulet calls Juliet  
a person who argues unnecessarily over  
fine points (**choplogic**) and says she is a  
spoiled child (**minion**). He tells her to  
prepare herself (**fettle your fine joints**)  
for the wedding or he’ll haul her there  
in a cart for criminals (**hurdle**). He calls  
her an anemic piece of dead flesh (**green-**  
**sickness carrion**) and a coward  
(**tallow-face**).

**164 My fingers itch:** I feel like hitting you.

**168 hilding:** a good-for-nothing person.

**171 smatter:** chatter.

**174 Utter . . . bowl:** Save your words  
of wisdom for a gathering of gossips.

**179 matched:** married.

Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly trained,  
Stuffed, as they say, with honorable parts,  
Proportioned as one's thought would wish a man—  
And then to have a wretched puling fool,  
185 A whining mammet, in her fortunes tender,  
To answer "I'll not wed, I cannot love;  
I am too young, I pray you pardon me"!  
But, an you will not wed, I'll pardon you.  
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.  
190 Look to't, think on't; I do not use to jest.  
Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise:  
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;  
An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,  
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,  
195 Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.  
Trust to't. Bethink you. I'll not be forsworn.  
[Exit.]

**Juliet.** Is there no pity sitting in the clouds  
That sees into the bottom of my grief?  
O sweet my mother, cast me not away!  
200 Delay this marriage for a month, a week;  
Or if you do not, make the bridal bed  
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

**Lady Capulet.** Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.  
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.  
[Exit.]

205 **Juliet.** O God!—O nurse, how shall this be prevented?  
My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven.  
How shall that faith return again to earth  
Unless that husband send it me from heaven  
By leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me.  
210 Alack, alack, that heaven should practice stratagems  
Upon so soft a subject as myself!  
What sayst thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?  
Some comfort, nurse.

**Nurse.** Faith, here it is.  
Romeo is banish'd; and all the world to nothing  
215 That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;  
Or if he do, it needs must be by stealth.  
Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,  
I think it best you married with the County.  
O, he's a lovely gentleman!  
220 Romeo's a dishclout to him. An eagle, madam,

184 **puling:** crying.

185 **mammet:** doll.

189–195 Capulet swears that he'll kick Juliet out and cut her off financially if she refuses to marry.

196 **I'll not be forsworn:** I will not break my promise to Paris.

207–211 Juliet is worried about the sin of being married to two men. She asks how heaven can play such tricks (**practice stratagems**) on her.

213–222 The nurse gives Juliet advice. She says that since Romeo is banished, he's no good to her; Juliet should marry Paris. Romeo is a dishcloth (**dishclout**) compared to Paris.

Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye  
As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,  
I think you are happy in this second match,  
For it excels your first; or if it did not,  
225 Your first is dead—or 'twere as good he were  
As living here and you no use of him.  
**Juliet.** Speakst thou this from thy heart?  
**Nurse.** And from my soul too; else beshrew them both.

**Juliet.** Amen!  
230 **Nurse.** What?  
**Juliet.** Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much.  
Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,  
Having displeased my father, to Laurence' cell,  
To make confession and to be absolved.  
235 **Nurse.** Marry, I will; and this is wisely done.

[*Exit.*]  
**Juliet.** Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!  
Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,  
Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue  
Which she hath praised him with above compare  
240 So many thousand times? Go, counselor!  
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain. **K**  
I'll to the friar to know his remedy.  
If all else fail, myself have power to die.  
[*Exit.*]

**222 beshrew:** curse.

**223–225** This new marriage will be better than the first, which is as good as over.

**229 Amen:** I agree—that is, curse your heart and soul.

**236–238 ancient damnation:** old devil;  
**dispraise:** criticize.

**241 Thou . . . twain:** I'll no longer tell you my secrets.

**K CHARACTER**

How has Juliet's relationship with the nurse changed? Citing details from their **interactions**, explain the main reason for the change.



**READING 4** Explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text.

**RC-9(A)** Reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension.

## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** How is Romeo accidentally responsible for Mercutio's death?
- 2. Recall** Why does Prince Escalus banish Romeo from Verona?
- 3. Recall** What promise does Lord Capulet make to Paris?
- 4. Clarify** Why does Lord Capulet become so enraged with Juliet?

## Literary Analysis

- 5. Reading Shakespearean Drama** Review your list detailing the events in Act Three. What event in this act causes the most problems for Romeo and Juliet? Cite evidence to support your answer.
- 6. Analyze Character Motivation** What is Romeo's motivation for killing Tybalt? What are the consequences of this action? Citing evidence, explain whether you think Romeo's behavior is justified revenge or a disastrous mistake.
- 7. Interpret Allusions** Find two allusions in Act Three, and record them in a chart like the one shown. Complete the chart by describing what each allusion is a reference to and explaining what each means.

<i>Scene and Lines</i>	<i>Allusion</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Scene 1, lines 70–72</i>	<i>Mercutio...</i> Tybalt, you ratcatcher, will you walk? <i>Tybalt.</i> What wouldst thou have with me? <i>Mercutio.</i> Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.	<i>In Act Two, Scene 4, there was an allusion to a cat named Tybalt in a common story of the time. Mercutio alludes to this story again here to taunt Tybalt and make him want to fight.</i>

- 8. Evaluate Characters** Compare and contrast the behaviors of the nurse and Friar Laurence in Act Three. On the basis of their actions and interactions with other characters, which of the two would you trust more if you were Romeo or Juliet? Explain, citing evidence from the play.

## Literary Criticism

- 9. Philosophical Context** In the first three acts of *Romeo and Juliet*, both the Chorus and the characters make frequent references to the role of fate in life. How does this notion of fate differ from contemporary views? Do people still think this way today? Explain your answer.



# Act Four

## SCENE 1 *Friar Laurence's cell.*

*When Juliet arrives at Friar Laurence's cell, she is upset to find Paris there making arrangements for their wedding. When Paris leaves, the panicked Juliet tells the friar that if he has no solution to her problem, she will kill herself. The friar explains his plan. Juliet will drink a potion he has made from his herbs, which will put her in a deathlike coma. When she wakes up two days later in the family tomb, Romeo will be waiting for her, and they will escape to Mantua together.*

[Enter Friar Laurence and Paris.]

**Friar Laurence.** On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

**Paris.** My father Capulet will have it so,  
And I am nothing slow to slack his haste.

**Friar Laurence.** You say you do not know the lady's mind.

5 Uneven is the course; I like it not. **A**

**Paris.** Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,  
And therefore have I little talked of love;  
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.  
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous

10 That she do give her sorrow so much sway,  
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage  
To stop the inundation of her tears,  
Which, too much minded by herself alone,  
May be put from her by society.

15 Now do you know the reason of this haste.

**Friar Laurence** [*aside*]. I would I knew not why it should be  
slowed.—

Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.

[Enter Juliet.]

**Paris.** Happily met, my lady and my wife!

**Juliet.** That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

20 **Paris.** That may be must be, love, on Thursday next.

**Juliet.** What must be shall be.

**Friar Laurence.** That's a certain text.

**Paris.** Come you to make confession to this father?

**Juliet.** To answer that, I should confess to you.

**2–3 My . . . haste:** Capulet is eager to have the wedding on Thursday and so am I.

**4–5 You . . . course:** You don't know how Juliet feels about this. It's a very uncertain (**uneven**) plan.

### **A** CHARACTER

What is the friar's real **motive** for wanting to slow down the wedding preparations?

**13–14 which . . . society:** which, thought about too much by her in privacy, may be put from her mind if she is forced to be with others. *According to Paris, why does Capulet want Juliet to marry so quickly?*

**19–28** Juliet once again chooses her words carefully to avoid lying and to avoid telling her secret.

Friar Laurence mixes a potion in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1995 production.



**Paris.** Do not deny to him that you love me.

25 **Juliet.** I will confess to you that I love him.

**Paris.** So will ye, I am sure, that you love me.

**Juliet.** If I do so, it will be of more price,  
Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

**Paris.** Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.

30 **Juliet.** The tears have got small victory by that,  
For it was bad enough before their spite.

**Paris.** Thou wrongst it more than tears with that report.

**Juliet.** That is no slander, sir, which is a truth;  
And what I spake, I spake it to my face.

35 **Paris.** Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it.

**Juliet.** It may be so, for it is not mine own.  
Are you at leisure, holy father, now,  
Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

**Friar Laurence.** My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now.

40 My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

**Paris.** God shield I should disturb devotion!  
Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye.  
Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss.

[*Exit.*]

**Juliet.** O, shut the door! and when thou hast done so,  
45 Come weep with me—past hope, past cure, past help!

**Friar Laurence.** Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief;  
It strains me past the compass of my wits.  
I hear thou must, and nothing may prorogue it,  
On Thursday next be married to this County.

50 **Juliet.** Tell me not, friar, that thou hearest of this,  
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it.  
If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,  
Do thou but call my resolution wise  
And with this knife I'll help it presently.

55 God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;  
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo's sealed,  
Shall be the label to another deed,  
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt  
Turn to another, this shall slay them both.

60 Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time,

25 *Whom does "him" refer to in this line?*

30–31 **The tears . . . spite:** The tears haven't ruined my face; it wasn't all that beautiful before they did their damage.

35 Paris says he owns Juliet's face (since she will soon marry him). Insulting her face, he says, insults him, its owner.

47–48 **compass:** limit; **prorogue:** postpone.

52–53 **If in . . . wise:** If you can't find a way to help me, at least agree that my plan is wise.

56–67 **And ere this hand . . . of remedy:** Before I sign another wedding agreement (**deed**), I will use this knife to kill myself. If you, with your years of experience (**long-experienced time**), can't help me, I'll end my sufferings (**extremes**) and solve the problem myself.

Give me some present counsel; or, behold,  
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife  
Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that  
Which the commission of thy years and art  
65 Could to no issue of true honor bring.  
Be not so long to speak. I long to die  
If what thou speakst speak not of remedy.

**Friar Laurence.** Hold, daughter, I do spy a kind of hope,  
Which craves as desperate an execution  
70 As that is desperate which we would prevent.  
If, rather than to marry County Paris,  
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,  
Then is it likely thou wilt undertake  
A thing like death to chide away this shame,  
75 That copest with death himself to scape from it;  
And, if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy.

**Juliet.** O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,  
From off the battlements of yonder tower,  
Or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk  
80 Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears,  
Or shut me nightly in a charnel house,  
O'ercovered quite with dead men's rattling bones,  
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;  
Or bid me go into a new-made grave  
85 And hide me with a dead man in his shroud—  
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble—  
And I will do it without fear or doubt,  
To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

**Friar Laurence.** Hold, then. Go home, be merry, give consent  
90 To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow.  
Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone:  
Let not the nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.  
Take thou this vial, being then in bed,  
And this distilled liquor drink thou off;  
95 When presently through all thy veins shall run  
A cold and drowsy humor; for no pulse  
Shall keep his native progress, but surcease;  
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest;  
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade  
100 To paly ashes, thy eyes' windows fall

## Language Coach

**Commonly Confused Words** The words *council* and *counsel* are easy to confuse. One means “advice” or “to advise”; the other refers to a group of people who advise, administrate, or govern. Which is which? What does *counsel* mean in line 61?

**71–76 If, rather than . . . remedy:** If you are desperate enough to kill yourself, then you'll be daring enough to try the deathlike solution that I propose.

**77–88** Juliet gives a lengthy list of things she would do rather than marry Paris. **charnel house:** a storehouse for bones from old graves; **reekly shanks:** stinking bones; **chapless:** without jaws. The description in lines 84–88 comes closer to Juliet's future than she knows.

**89–120** The friar explains his plan.

**93 vial:** small bottle.

**96–106 humor:** liquid; **no pulse . . . pleasant sleep:** Your pulse will stop (**surcease**), and you will turn cold, pale, and stiff, as if you were dead; this condition will last for 42 hours.



Like death when he shuts up the day of life;  
Each part, deprived of supple government,  
Shall, stiff and stark and cold, appear like death;  
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death  
105 Thou shalt continue two-and-forty hours,  
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.  
Now, when the bridegroom in the morning comes  
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead.  
Then, as the manner of our country is,  
110 In thy best robes uncovered on the bier  
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault  
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.  
In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,  
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;  
115 And hither shall he come; and he and I  
Will watch thy waking, and that very night  
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.  
And this shall free thee from this present shame,  
If no inconstant toy nor womanish fear  
120 Abate thy valor in the acting it.

**Juliet.** Give me, give me! O, tell me not of fear!

**Friar Laurence.** Hold! Get you gone, be strong and prosperous  
In this resolve. I'll send a friar with speed  
To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

125 **Juliet.** Love give me strength! and strength shall help afford.  
Farewell, dear father.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE 2 *Capulet's house.*

*Capulet is making plans for the wedding on Thursday. Juliet arrives and apologizes to him, saying that she will marry Paris. Capulet is so relieved that he reschedules the wedding for the next day, Wednesday.*

[*Enter Capulet, Lady Capulet, Nurse, and Servingmen.*]

**Capulet.** So many guests invite as here are writ.

[*Exit a Servingman.*]

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.

**Servingman.** You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if they can  
lick their fingers.

107–112 *According to the friar's plan, what will happen when Paris comes to wake Juliet?*

111–112 **same ancient vault . . . lie:** same ancient tomb where all members of the Capulet family are buried.

114 **drift:** plan.

119–120 **inconstant toy:** foolish whim;  
**abate thy valor:** weaken your courage.

1–8 Capulet is having a cheerful conversation with his servants about the wedding preparations. One servant assures him that he will test (**try**) the cooks he hires by making them taste their own food (**lick their fingers**).

5 **Capulet.** How canst thou try them so?

**Servingman.** Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own fingers. Therefore he that cannot lick his fingers goes not with me. **B**

**Capulet.** Go, begone.

[*Exit Servingman.*]

10 We shall be much unfurnished for this time.  
What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

**Nurse.** Ay, forsooth.

**Capulet.** Well, he may chance to do some good on her.  
A peevish self-willed harlotry it is.

[*Enter Juliet.*]

15 **Nurse.** See where she comes from shrift with merry look.

**Capulet.** How now, my headstrong? Where have you been gadding?

**Juliet.** Where I have learnt me to repent the sin  
Of disobedient opposition  
To you and your behests, and am enjoined

20 By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here  
To beg your pardon. Pardon, I beseech you!  
Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

**Capulet.** Send for the County. Go tell him of this.  
I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning.

25 **Juliet.** I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell  
And gave him what becomed love I might,  
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

**Capulet.** Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.  
This is as't should be. Let me see the County.

30 Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.  
Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,  
All our whole city is much bound to him. **C**

**Juliet.** Nurse, will you go with me into my closet  
To help me sort such needful ornaments

35 As you think fit to furnish me tomorrow?

**Lady Capulet.** No, not till Thursday. There is time enough.

**Capulet.** Go, nurse, go with her. We'll to church tomorrow.  
[*Exeunt Juliet and Nurse.*]

## **B COMIC RELIEF**

Think about the purpose that comic relief serves. Why might Shakespeare have chosen to begin this scene with a light, humorous conversation?

10 **unfurnished:** unprepared.

14 A silly, stubborn girl she is.

19 **behests:** orders; **enjoined:** commanded.

24 I'll have this wedding scheduled for tomorrow morning.

## **C DRAMATIC IRONY**

What is ironic about Capulet's praise of Friar Laurence?

36–39 Lady Capulet urges her husband to wait until Thursday as originally planned. She needs time to get food (**provision**) ready for the wedding party.

**Lady Capulet.** We shall be short in our provision.  
'Tis now near night.

**Capulet.** Tush, I will stir about,  
40 And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.  
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her.  
I'll not to bed tonight; let me alone.  
I'll play the housewife for this once. What, ho!  
They are all forth; well, I will walk myself  
45 To County Paris, to prepare him up  
Against tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light,  
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed. **D**  
[*Exeunt.*]

**39–46** Capulet is so set on Wednesday that he promises to make the arrangements himself.

**D TRAGEDY**

Think about how the **plot** of this tragedy is unfolding. What does moving the wedding up by one day do to Friar Laurence's plan?

### SCENE 3 *Juliet's bedroom.*

*Juliet sends her mother and the nurse away and prepares to take the drug the friar has given her. She is confused and frightened but finally puts the vial to her lips and drinks.*

[*Enter Juliet and Nurse.*]

**Juliet.** Ay, those attires are best; but, gentle nurse,  
I pray thee leave me to myself tonight;  
For I have need of many orisons  
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,  
5 Which, well thou knowest, is cross and full of sin.

**3 orisons:** prayers.

[*Enter Lady Capulet.*]

**Lady Capulet.** What, are you busy, ho? Need you my help?

**Juliet.** No madam; we have culled such necessities  
As are behooveful for our state tomorrow.  
So please you, let me now be left alone,  
10 And let the nurse this night sit up with you;  
For I am sure you have your hands full all  
In this so sudden business.

**7–8 we have . . . tomorrow:** We have picked out (**culled**) everything appropriate for the wedding tomorrow.

**Lady Capulet.** Good night.  
Get thee to bed and rest, for thou hast need.

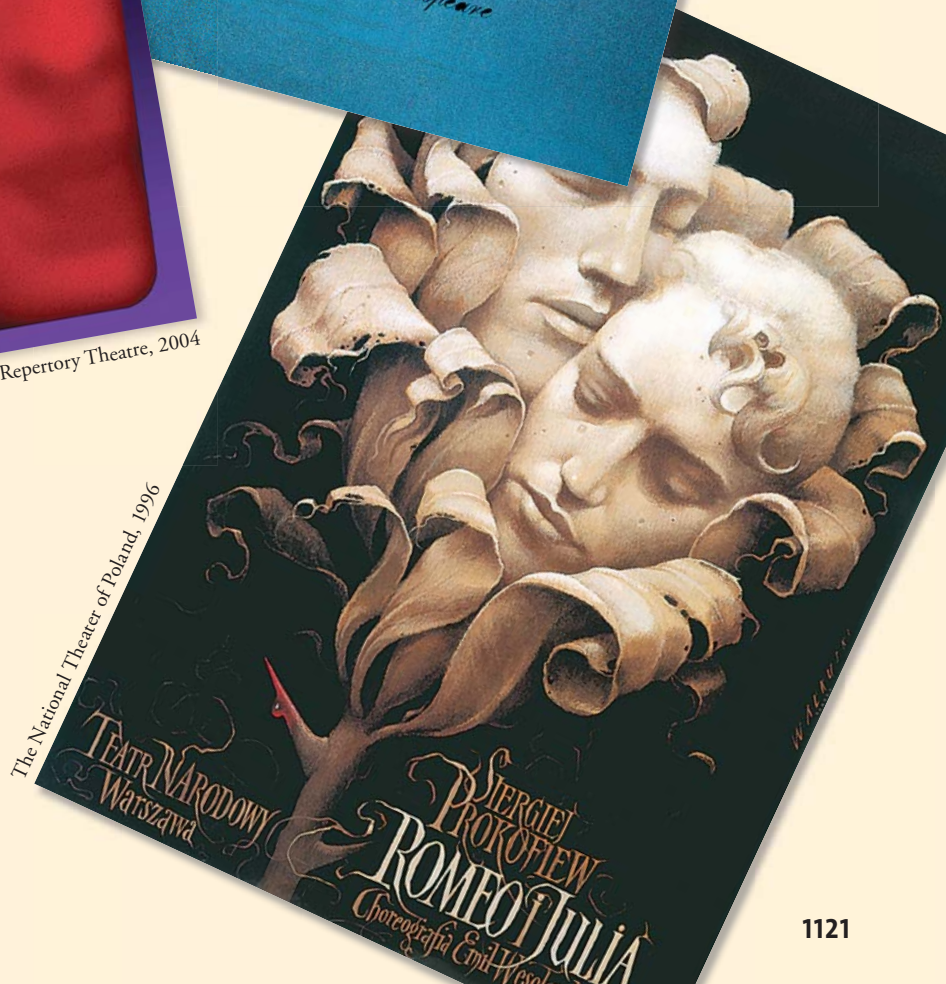
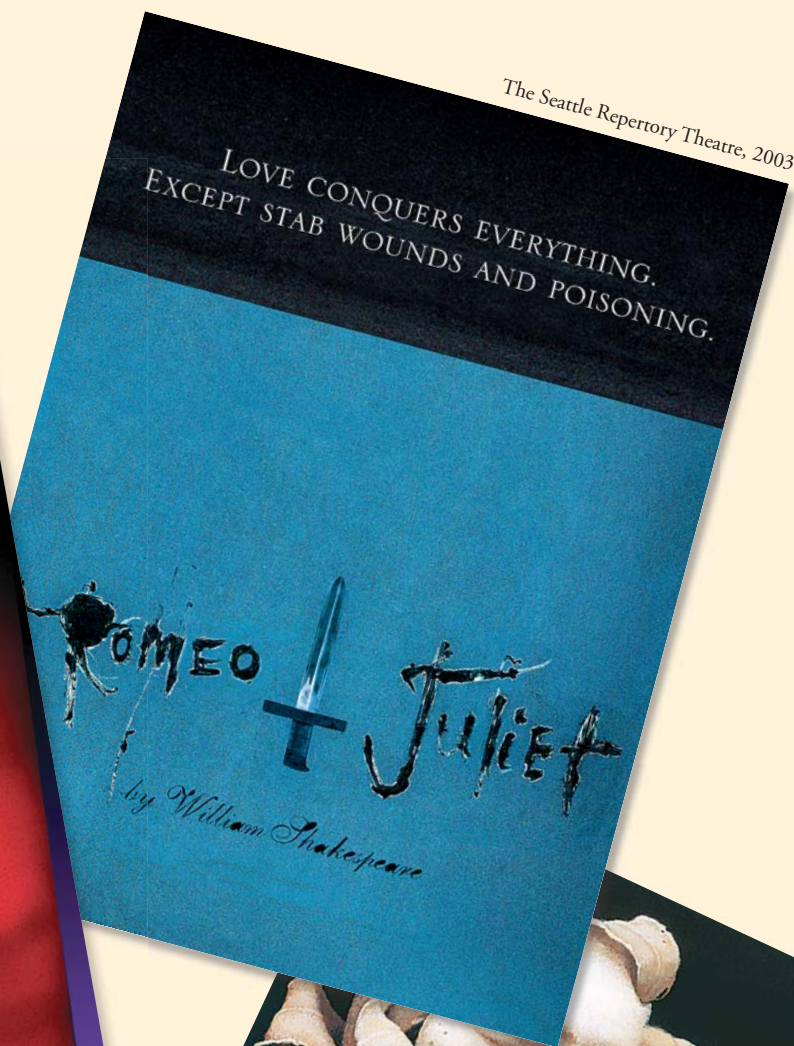
[*Exeunt Lady Capulet and Nurse.*]

**Juliet.** Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.  
15 I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins  
That almost freezes up the heat of life.  
I'll call them back again to comfort me.  
Nurse!—What should she do here?  
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.

**17–19** In her fear, Juliet starts to call the nurse back but realizes that she must be alone to drink the poison.



## Behind the Curtain



### Promotion

Imagine that you knew nothing about the story of the star-crossed lovers. What clues about the play do each of these **promotional** posters provide? Which poster would most make you want to see the play? Explain your answers.



20 Come, vial.  
 What if this mixture do not work at all?  
 Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?  
 No, no! This shall forbid it. Lie thou there.  
*[lays down a dagger]*  
 What if it be a poison which the friar  
 25 Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,  
 Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored  
 Because he married me before to Romeo?  
 I fear it is; and yet methinks it should not,  
 For he hath still been tried a holy man. **E**  
 30 How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
 I wake before the time that Romeo  
 Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point!  
 Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,  
 To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
 35 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?  
 Or, if I live, is it not very like  
 The horrible conceit of death and night,  
 Together with the terror of the place—  
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle  
 40 Where for this many hundred years the bones  
 Of all my buried ancestors are packed;  
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,  
 Lies fest'ring in his shroud; where, as they say,  
 At some hours in the night spirits resort—  
 45 Alack, alack, is it not like that I,  
 So early waking—what with loathsome smells,  
 And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,  
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad—  
 O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,  
 50 Environed with all these hideous fears,  
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints,  
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,  
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone  
 As with a club dash out my desp'rate brains?  
 55 O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost  
 Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body  
 Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!  
 Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.  
*[She drinks and falls upon her bed within the curtains.]*

**23 This shall forbid it:** A dagger will be her alternative means of keeping from marrying Paris.

**24–57** Juliet lists her various doubts and fears about what she is about to do.

### **E CHARACTER**

In her anxious state, what does Juliet suspect about Friar Laurence's **motives** for giving her the potion? Do you think she really believes this to be true? Explain.

**36–43** Juliet fears the vision (**conceit**) she might have on waking in the family tomb and seeing the rotting body of Tybalt.

**45–54** She fears that the smells together with the sounds of ghosts screaming might make her lose her mind and commit bizarre acts. Mandrake root was thought to look like the human form and to scream when pulled from the ground.

**57 stay:** stop.

## SCENE 4 *Capulet's house.*

*It is now the next morning, nearly time for the wedding. The household is happy and excited as everyone makes final preparations.*

[Enter Lady Capulet and Nurse.]

**Lady Capulet.** Hold, take these keys and fetch more spices, nurse.

**Nurse.** They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.

[Enter Capulet.]

**Capulet.** Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock hath crowed,  
The curfew bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.

5 Look to the baked meats, good Angelica;  
Spare not for cost.

**Nurse.** Go, you cot-quean, go,  
Get you to bed! Faith, you'll be sick tomorrow  
For this night's watching.

**Capulet.** No, not a whit. What, I have watched ere now  
10 All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

**Lady Capulet.** Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your time;  
But I will watch you from such watching now.

[Exeunt Lady Capulet and Nurse.]

**Capulet.** A jealous hood, a jealous hood!

[Enter three or four Servants, with spits and logs and baskets.]

Now, fellow,

What is there?

15 **First Servant.** Things for the cook, sir; but I know not what.

**Capulet.** Make haste, make haste. [Exit Servant.] Sirrah, fetch  
drier logs.

Call Peter; he will show thee where they are.

**Second Servant.** I have a head, sir, that will find out logs  
And never trouble Peter for the matter.

20 **Capulet.** Mass, and well said, merry whoreson, ha!  
Thou shalt be loggerhead. [Exit Servant.] Good faith, 'tis day.  
The County will be here with music straight,  
For so he said he would. [music within] I hear him near.  
Nurse! Wife! What, ho! What, nurse, I say!

**2 pastry:** the room where baking is done.

**5 good Angelica:** In his happy mood, Capulet even calls the nurse by her name.

**6 cot-quean:** The nurse playfully refers to Capulet as a "cottage quean," or housewife. This is a joke about his doing women's work (arranging the party).

**11–13** Lord and Lady Capulet joke about his being a woman chaser (**mouse-hunt**) as a young man. He makes fun of her jealousy (**jealous hood**).

**20–23** The joking between Capulet and his servants includes the mild oath **Mass**, short for "by the Mass," and **loggerhead**, a word for a stupid person as well as a pun, since the servant is searching for drier logs. **straight:** right away.

[Reenter Nurse.]

25 Go waken Juliet; go and trim her up.  
I'll go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,  
Make haste! The bridegroom he is come already:  
Make haste, I say.

[Exeunt.]

## SCENE 5 *Juliet's bedroom.*

*The joyous preparations suddenly change into plans for a funeral when the nurse discovers Juliet on her bed, apparently dead. Lord and Lady Capulet, Paris, and the nurse are overcome with grief. Friar Laurence tries to comfort them and instructs them to bring Juliet's body to the Capulet family tomb. The scene abruptly switches to humor, in a foolish conversation between the servant Peter and the musicians hired to play at the wedding.*

[Enter Nurse.]

**Nurse.** Mistress! what, mistress! Juliet! Fast, I warrant her, she.  
Why, lamb! why, lady! Fie, you slugabed!  
Why, love, I say! madam! sweetheart! Why, bride!  
What, not a word? You take your pennyworths now,  
5 Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,  
The County Paris hath set up his rest  
That you shall rest but little. God forgive me,  
Marry and amen, how sound is she asleep!  
I needs must wake her. Madam, madam, madam!  
10 Aye, let the County take you in your bed,  
He'll fright you up, i' faith. Will it not be?

[opens the curtains]

What, dressed and in your clothes and down again?  
I must needs wake you. Lady! lady! lady!  
Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!  
15 O well-a-day that ever I was born!  
Some aqua vitae, ho! My lord! my lady!

[Enter Lady Capulet.]

**Lady Capulet.** What noise is here?

**Nurse.** O lamentable day!

**Lady Capulet.** What is the matter?

**Nurse.** Look, look! O heavy day!

**Lady Capulet.** O me, O me! My child, my only life!

20 Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!  
Help! help! Call help.

**1–11** The nurse chatters as she bustles around the room. She calls Juliet a **slugabed**, or sleepyhead, who is trying to get her **pennyworths**, or small portions, of rest now, since after the wedding Paris won't let her get much sleep. When Juliet doesn't answer, the nurse opens the curtains that enclose the bed.

**17 lamentable:** filled with grief.

[Enter Capulet.]

**Capulet.** For shame, bring Juliet forth; her lord is come.

**Nurse.** She's dead, deceased; she's dead! Alack the day!

**Lady Capulet.** Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

25 **Capulet.** Ha! let me see her. Out alas! she's cold,  
Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;  
Life and these lips have long been separated.  
Death lies on her like an untimely frost  
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

30 **Nurse.** O lamentable day!

**Lady Capulet.** O woeful time!

**Capulet.** Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,  
Ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.

[Enter Friar Laurence and Paris, with Musicians.]

**Friar Laurence.** Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

28–29 What simile does Capulet use to describe what has happened to Juliet?

### Language Coach

**Derivations** Words formed from another word or base are **derivations**. The word *lamentable* (line 30) is derived from the base word *lament*, “to grieve.” What does *lamentable* mean? What other words are derived from this same word?



Friar Laurence and the Capulets mourn for Juliet in the University of Victoria's 1998 production.



**Capulet.** Ready to go, but never to return.  
 35 O son, the night before thy wedding day  
 Hath death lain with thy wife. See, there she lies,  
 Flower as she was, deflowered by him.  
 Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;  
 My daughter he hath wedded. I will die  
 40 And leave him all. Life, living, all is Death's.

**Paris.** Have I thought long to see this morning's face,  
 And doth it give me such a sight as this?

**Lady Capulet.** Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!  
 Most miserable hour that e'er time saw  
 45 In lasting labor of his pilgrimage!  
 But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,  
 But one thing to rejoice and solace in,  
 And cruel Death hath caught it from my sight!

**Nurse.** O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!  
 50 Most lamentable day, most woeful day  
 That ever, ever I did yet behold!  
 O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!  
 Never was seen so black a day as this.  
 O woeful day! O woeful day!

55 **Paris.** Beguiled, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!  
 Most detestable Death, by thee beguiled,  
 By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown!  
 O love! O life! not life, but love in death!

**Capulet.** Despised, distressed, hated, martyred, killed!  
 60 Uncomfortable time, why camest thou now  
 To murder, murder our solemnity?  
 O child! O child! my soul, and not my child!  
 Dead art thou, dead! alack, my child is dead,  
 And with my child my joys are buried!

65 **Friar Laurence.** Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure lives not  
 In these confusions. Heaven and yourself  
 Had part in this fair maid! now heaven hath all,  
 And all the better is it for the maid.  
 Your part in her you could not keep from death,  
 70 But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.  
 The most you sought was her promotion,  
 For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced;  
 And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced  
 Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?

75 O, in this love, you love your child so ill

**40 Life . . . Death's:** My life, my possessions, and everything else of mine belongs to Death.

**44–48 Most miserable . . . my sight:** This is the most miserable hour that time ever saw on its long journey. I had only one child to make me happy, and Death has taken (**caught**) her from me.

**55 beguiled:** tricked.

**60–61 why . . . solemnity:** Why did Death have to come to murder our celebration?

**65–78** The friar comforts the family. He says that the cure for disaster (**confusion**) cannot be found in cries of grief. Juliet's family and heaven once shared her; now heaven has all of her. All the family ever wanted was the best for her; now she's in heaven—what could be better than that? It is best to die young, when the soul is still pure, without sin.

That you run mad, seeing that she is well.  
She's not well married that lives married long,  
But she's best married that dies married young.  
Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary  
80 On this fair corse, and, as the custom is,  
In all her best array bear her to church;  
For though fond nature bids us all lament,  
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

**Capulet.** All things that we ordained festival  
85 Turn from their office to black funeral—  
Our instruments to melancholy bells,  
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast;  
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;  
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse;  
90 And all things change them to the contrary.

**Friar Laurence.** Sir, go you in; and, madam, go with him;  
And go, Sir Paris. Every one prepare  
To follow this fair corse unto her grave.  
The heavens do lower upon you for some ill;  
95 Move them no more by crossing their high will.

[*Exeunt* Capulet, Lady Capulet, Paris, and Friar.]

**First Musician.** Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be gone.

**Nurse.** Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up,  
For well you know this is a pitiful case.

[*Exit.*]

**Second Musician.** Aye, by my troth, the case may be amended. **F**

[*Enter* Peter.]

100 **Peter.** Musicians, oh, musicians, “Heart’s ease, heart’s ease.” Oh,  
an you will have me live, play “Heart’s ease.”

**First Musician.** Why “Heart’s ease”?

**Peter.** Oh, musicians, because my heart itself plays “My heart is  
full of woe.” Oh, play me some merry dump, to comfort me.

105 **First Musician.** Not a dump we, ’tis no time to play now.

**Peter.** You will not, then?

**First Musician.** No.

**Peter.** I will then give it you soundly.

**79–80 stick . . . corse:** Put rosemary, an herb, on her corpse.

**82–83 though . . . merriment:** Though it's natural to cry, common sense tells us we should rejoice for the dead.

**84 ordained festival:** intended for the wedding.

**88 sullen dirges:** sad, mournful tunes.

**94–95 The heavens . . . will:** The fates (**heavens**) frown on you for some wrong you have done. Don't tempt them by refusing to accept their will (Juliet's death).

**F PUN**

Reread lines 96–99. The musician is talking about the case for his instrument. What “case” is the nurse referring to?

**100–138** After the tragedy of Juliet's “death,” Shakespeare injects a light and witty conversation between Peter and the musicians. Peter asks them to play “Heart's Ease,” a popular song of the time, or a **dump**, a slow dance melody. They refuse to play, and insults and puns are traded. Peter says that instead of money he'll give them a jeering speech (**gleek**), and he insults them by calling them minstrels. In return they call him a servant. Then both make puns on notes of the musical scale, re and fa.

**First Musician.** What will you give us?

110 **Peter.** No money, on my faith, but the gleek. I will give you the minstrel.

**First Musician.** Then will I give you the serving creature.

**Peter.** Then will I lay the serving creature's dagger on your pate. I will carry no crotchets. I'll re you, I'll fa you, do you note me?

113 **pate:** top of the head.

115 **First Musician.** An you re us and fa us, you note us.

**Second Musician.** Pray you put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

**Peter.** Then have at you with my wit! I will drybeat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger. Answer me like men:

120       “When griping grief the heart doth wound  
          And doleful dumps the mind oppress,  
          Then music with her silver sound—”

Why “silver sound”? Why “music with her silver sound”?—What say you, Simon Catling?

125 **First Musician.** Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

**Peter.** Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?

**Second Musician.** I say “silver sound” because musicians sound for silver.

**Peter.** Pretty too! What say you, James Soundpost?

130 **Third Musician.** Faith, I know not what to say.

**Peter.** Oh, I cry you mercy, you are the singer. I will say for you. It is “music with her silver sound” because musicians have no gold for sounding.

135       “Then music with her silver sound  
          With speedy help doth lend redress.”

[*Exit.*]

**First Musician.** What a pestilent knave is this same!

136 **pestilent:** bothersome; irritating.

**Second Musician.** Hang him, Jack! Come, we'll in here. Tarry for the mourners, and stay dinner.

[*Exeunt.*]



**READING 4** Explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text.

**RC-9(A)** Reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension.

## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** What reason does Paris give for Lord Capulet’s decision to move up the wedding?
- 2. Recall** At first, what does Juliet believe is the only solution to her problem?
- 3. Summarize** What plan does Friar Laurence devise for Juliet, and what reservations does Juliet have about this plan?

## Literary Analysis

- 4. Reading Shakespearean Drama** Review the events you recorded as you read Act Four, and think about how the characters’ interactions drive the plot forward. If the nurse had accompanied Juliet to Friar Laurence’s cell, do you think Juliet would have made a different decision? Explain.
- 5. Make Judgments** Do you feel sympathy for the Capulets, the nurse, and Paris when they express grief over Juliet’s death? Why or why not?
- 6. Identify Dramatic Irony** Dramatic irony exists when the reader or viewer knows something that one or more of the characters do not. Find three examples of dramatic irony in Act Four and record them in a chart like the one shown. Then explain how these ironic moments contribute to the building tension in the play.

<i>Scene and Lines</i>	<i>Dramatic Irony</i>
<i>Scene 1, lines 24–28</i>	<i>Paris asks Juliet to confess to Friar Laurence that she loves him, and Juliet carefully avoids denying it. We know that Juliet loves Romeo, not Paris.</i>

- 7. Recognize Protagonist and Antagonist** If Romeo and Juliet are the protagonists of this play, who or what is the antagonist? Keep in mind that an antagonist can be a character, a group of characters, a set of circumstances, or even society as a whole. Use details from the play to support your answer.
- 8. Evaluate Comic Relief** The humorous exchange between Peter and the musicians at the end of Act Four is an example of comic relief. It lightens the mood after the grief-filled speeches that follow the discovery of Juliet’s body. If you were producing a stage or film version of *Romeo and Juliet*, would you cut this passage, or do you think it serves an important purpose? Explain.

## Literary Criticism

- 9. Different Perspectives** How might older and younger audiences differ in their assessment of Romeo’s and Juliet’s actions? Explain your opinion, citing specific actions and interactions in the play.



# Act Five

## SCENE 1 *A street in Mantua.*

*Balthasar, Romeo's servant, comes from Verona to tell him that Juliet is dead and lies in the Capulets' tomb. Since Romeo has not yet received any word from the friar, he believes Balthasar. He immediately decides to return to Verona in order to die next to Juliet. He sends Balthasar away and sets out to find a pharmacist who will sell him poison.*

[Enter Romeo.]

**Romeo.** If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,  
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.  
My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,  
And all this day an unaccustomed spirit  
5 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.  
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead  
(Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think!)  
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips  
That I revived and was an emperor.  
10 Ah me! how sweet is love itself possessed,  
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy! **A**

[Enter Romeo's servant, Balthasar, booted.]

News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?  
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?  
How doth my lady? Is my father well?  
15 How fares my Juliet? That I ask again,  
For nothing can be ill if she be well.

**Balthasar.** Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.  
Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,  
And her immortal part with angels lives.  
20 I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault  
And presently took post to tell it you.  
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,  
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

**Romeo.** Is it e'en so? Then I defy you, stars!  
25 Thou knowst my lodging. Get me ink and paper  
And hire posthorses. I will hence tonight.

**Balthasar.** I do beseech you, sir, have patience.  
Your looks are pale and wild and do import  
Some misadventure.

**1–5 If I may . . . cheerful thoughts:** If I can trust my dreams, something joyful is about to happen. My heart (**bosom's lord**) is happy and I am content.

### **A TRAGEDY**

**Paraphrase** lines 1–11. What part of Romeo's seemingly happy dream **foreshadows** the tragic events to come?

**17–19** Balthasar replies that Juliet is well, since although her body lies in the Capulets' (**Capels'**) burial vault, her soul (**her immortal part**) is with the angels.

**21 presently took post:** immediately rode (to Mantua).

**23 you did . . . office:** you gave me the duty of reporting important news to you.

**24 I . . . stars:** Romeo angrily challenges fate, which has caused him so much grief.

**28–29 import some misadventure:** suggest that something bad will happen.

Romeo and Juliet in the 1994 production of the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C.





**Romeo.** Tush, thou art deceived.

30 Leave me and do the thing I bid thee do.  
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

**Balthasar.** No, my good lord.

**Romeo.** No matter. Get thee gone  
And hire those horses. I'll be with thee straight.

[*Exit Balthasar.*]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight. **B**

35 Let's see for means. O mischief, thou art swift  
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!

I do remember an apothecary,  
And hereabouts he dwells, which late I noted  
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,

40 Culling of simples. Meager were his looks,  
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;  
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuffed, and other skins  
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves

45 A beggarly account of empty boxes,  
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,  
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses  
Were thinly scattered, to make up a show.

Noting this penury, to myself I said,

50 "An if a man did need a poison now  
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,  
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him."  
O, this same thought did but forerun my need,  
And this same needy man must sell it me.

55 As I remember, this should be the house.  
Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.  
What, ho! apothecary!

[*Enter Apothecary.*]

**Apothecary.** Who calls so loud?

**Romeo.** Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.  
Hold, there is forty ducats. Let me have

60 A dram of poison, such soon-speeding gear  
As will disperse itself through all the veins  
That the life-weary taker may fall dead,  
And that the trunk may be discharged of breath  
As violently as hasty powder fired

65 Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

**Apothecary.** Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law  
Is death to any he that utters them.

**B CHARACTER**

What does Romeo mean in line 34? Explain whether he thoughtfully considers his options or plunges immediately into action.

**35–40 Let's . . . means:** Let me find a way (to join Juliet in death); **apothecary:** pharmacist; **tattered weeds:** ragged clothes; **culling of simples:** selecting herbs.

**47 cakes of roses:** rose petals pressed together to create a perfume.

**49 penury:** poverty.

**50–52 "An if a man . . . sell it him":** Though it is a crime to sell poison in Mantua, the apothecary is such a miserable (**caitiff**) wretch that he would probably do it for the money.

**59 ducats:** gold coins.

**60–65** Romeo wants fast-acting (**soon-speeding**) poison that will work as quickly as gunpowder exploding in a cannon.

**67 any . . . them:** any person who dispenses or sells them.

**Romeo.** Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness  
And fearest to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,  
70 Need and oppression starveth in thine eyes,  
Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back:  
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law;  
The world affords no law to make thee rich;  
Then be not poor, but break it and take this.

75 **Apothecary.** My poverty but not my will consents.

**Romeo.** I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

**Apothecary.** Put this in any liquid thing you will  
And drink it off, and if you had the strength  
Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

80 **Romeo.** There is thy gold—worse poison to men's souls,  
Doing more murder in this loathsome world,  
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.  
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.  
Farewell. Buy food and get thyself in flesh.

85 Come, cordial and not poison, go with me  
To Juliet's grave; for there must I use thee.

[*Exeunt.*]

**72–74** Romeo urges the apothecary to improve his situation by breaking the law and selling him the poison.

**75** I'm doing this for the money, not because I think it's right.

**79** *dispatch you straight*: kill you instantly.

**85** Romeo refers to the poison as a **cordial**, a drink believed to be good for the heart. *Why does he refer to it in this way?*

## SCENE 2 *Friar Laurence's cell in Verona.*

*Friar Laurence's messenger arrives, saying that he was unable to deliver the letter to Romeo. Friar Laurence, his plans ruined, rushes to the Capulet vault before Juliet awakes. He intends to hide her in his room until Romeo can come to take her away.*

[*Enter* Friar John.]

**Friar John.** Holy Franciscan friar, brother, ho!

[*Enter* Friar Laurence.]

**Friar Laurence.** This same should be the voice of Friar John.  
Welcome from Mantua. What says Romeo?  
Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

5 **Friar John.** Going to find a barefoot brother out,  
One of our order to associate me,  
Here in this city visiting the sick,  
And finding him, the searchers of the town,  
Suspecting that we both were in a house  
10 Where the infectious pestilence did reign,  
Sealed up the doors, and would not let us forth,  
So that my speed to Mantua there was stayed.

**5–12** Friar John explains why he did not go to Mantua. He had asked another friar (**barefoot brother**), who had been caring for the sick, to go with him. The health officials of the town, believing that the friars had come into contact with a deadly plague (**infectious pestilence**), locked them up to keep them from infecting others.



**Friar Laurence.** Who bare my letter, then, to Romeo?

**Friar John.** I could not send it—here it is again—

15 Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,  
So fearful were they of infection.

**Friar Laurence.** Unhappy fortune! By my brotherhood,

The letter was not nice, but full of charge,  
Of dear import, and the neglecting it

20 May do much danger. Friar John, go hence,  
Get me an iron crow and bring it straight  
Unto my cell.

**Friar John.** Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

[*Exit.*]

**Friar Laurence.** Now must I to the monument alone.

Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake.

25 She will beshrew me much that Romeo  
Hath had no notice of these accidents;  
But I will write again to Mantua,  
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come—  
Poor living corse, closed in a dead man's tomb! **C**

[*Exit.*]

**13 bare:** carried (bore).

**18–20** The letter wasn't trivial (**nice**) but contained a message of great importance (**dear import**). The fact that it wasn't sent (**neglecting it**) may cause great harm.

**21 iron crow:** crowbar.

**25–26 She ... accidents:** She will be furious with me when she learns that Romeo doesn't know what has happened.

**C SOLILOQUY**

Explain what you learn about the friar's new plan in this soliloquy. Why is it essential that the friar reach Juliet before Romeo does?

### SCENE 3 *The cemetery that contains the Capulets' tomb.*

*In the dark of night Paris comes to the cemetery to put flowers on Juliet's grave. At the same time Romeo arrives, and Paris hides. Paris assumes that Romeo is going to harm the bodies. He challenges Romeo, they fight, and Romeo kills Paris. When Romeo recognizes the dead Paris, he lays his body inside the tomb as Paris requested. Romeo declares his love for Juliet, drinks the poison, and dies. Shortly after, Friar Laurence arrives and discovers both bodies. When Juliet wakes up, the friar urges her to leave with him before the guard comes. Juliet refuses, and when the friar leaves, she kills herself with Romeo's dagger. The guards and the prince arrive, followed by the Capulets and Lord Montague, whose wife has just died of grief because of Romeo's exile. Friar Laurence explains what has happened. Capulet and Montague finally end their feud and promise to erect statues honoring Romeo and Juliet.*

[*Enter Paris and his Page with flowers and a torch.*]

**Paris.** Give me thy torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof.

Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.

Under yond yew tree lay thee all along,  
Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground.

**1 aloof:** some distance away.

## Behind the Curtain

The Royal Shakespeare Company's 2004 production



The Shakespeare Israeli Company's 1994 production



## Lighting

Directors use a variety of techniques to make a play's **lighting** effective. For example, spotlights can illuminate one character while leaving others in semi-darkness, and effects such as candles or prominent shadows can help create specific moods. What is distinctive about the lighting in each of these shots? Explain the effect each technique produces.

The Royal Opera House's 2000 Covent Garden production



5 So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread  
(Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves)  
But thou shalt hear it. Whistle then to me,  
As signal that thou hearst something approach.  
Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

10 **Page** [*aside*]. I am almost afraid to stand alone  
Here in the churchyard; yet I will adventure.

[*withdraws*]

**Paris**. Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew

[*He strews the tomb with flowers.*]

(O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones)  
Which with sweet water nightly I will dew;

15 Or, wanting that, with tears distilled by moans.  
The obsequies that I for thee will keep  
Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

[*The Page whistles.*]

The boy gives warning something doth approach.

What cursed foot wanders this way tonight

20 To cross my obsequies and true love's rite?  
What, with a torch? Muffle me, night, awhile.

[*withdraws*]

[*Enter Romeo and Balthasar with a torch, a mattock, and a crow of iron.*]

**Romeo**. Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.

Hold, take this letter. Early in the morning  
See thou deliver it to my lord and father.

25 Give me the light. Upon thy life I charge thee,  
Whate'er thou hearest or seest, stand all aloof  
And do not interrupt me in my course.

Why I descend into this bed of death  
Is partly to behold my lady's face,

30 But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger  
A precious ring—a ring that I must use  
In dear employment. Therefore hence, be gone.

But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry  
In what I farther shall intend to do,

35 By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint  
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs.  
The time and my intents are savage-wild,  
More fierce and more inexorable far  
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea. **D**

**12–17** Paris promises to decorate Juliet's grave with flowers, as he does now, and sprinkle it with either perfume (**sweet water**) or his tears. He will perform these honoring rites (**obsequies**) every night.

**20 cross**: interfere with.

**21 muffle**: hide.

**mattock . . . iron**: an ax and a crowbar.

**32 in dear employment**: for an important purpose.

**33 jealous**: curious.

**37–39** Romeo's intention is more unstoppable (**inexorable**) than hungry (**empty**) tigers or the waves of an ocean.

**D TRAGEDY**

Reread lines 25–39 and think about how tragedies usually end for the main characters. Paraphrase the two reasons Romeo gives for going into the tomb. What third reason does he hint at?

40 **Balthasar.** I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

**Romeo.** So shalt thou show me friendship. Take thou that.  
Live, and be prosperous; and farewell, good fellow.

**Balthasar** [*aside*]. For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout.  
His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.

[*withdraws*]

45 **Romeo.** Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And in despite I'll cram thee with more food.

[*Romeo opens the tomb.*]

**Paris.** This is that banish'd haughty Montague  
50 That murdered my love's cousin—with which grief  
It is supposed the fair creature died—  
And here is come to do some villainous shame  
To the dead bodies. I will apprehend him.  
Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague!

55 Can vengeance be pursued further than death?  
Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee.  
Obey, and go with me; for thou must die.

**Romeo.** I must indeed; and therefore came I hither.  
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desp'rate man.

60 Fly hence and leave me. Think upon these gone;  
Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,  
Put not another sin upon my head  
By urging me to fury. O, be gone!  
By heaven, I love thee better than myself.

65 For I come hither armed against myself.  
Stay not, be gone. Live, and hereafter say  
A madman's mercy bid thee run away.

**Paris.** I do defy thy conjuration  
And apprehend thee for a felon here.

70 **Romeo.** Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy! **E**  
[*They fight.*]

43 *Who else besides Balthasar is hiding in the cemetery at this point?*

45–48 Romeo addresses the tomb as though it were devouring people. He calls it a hateful stomach (**detestable maw**) that is filled (**gorged**) with Juliet, the **dearest morsel of the earth**. He uses his crowbar to open its **rotten jaws** and moves to enter the tomb.

49–53 Recognizing Romeo, Paris speaks these first few lines to himself. He is angry with Romeo, believing that Romeo's killing Tybalt caused Juliet to die of grief.

58–67 Romeo rejects Paris' challenge. He tells Paris to think of those already killed and to leave before Romeo is forced to kill him too. Romeo swears that he has come to harm himself, not Paris.

68 I reject your appeal.

**E CHARACTER**

Consider what you know about Romeo's **traits** and **flaws**. Is Romeo at fault for fighting Paris? Why or why not?



**Page.** O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.

[*Exit.*]

**Paris.** O, I am slain! [*falls*] If thou be merciful,  
Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.

[*dies*]

**Romeo.** In faith, I will. Let me peruse this face.

75 Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!  
What said my man when my betossed soul  
Did not attend him as we rode? I think  
He told me Paris should have married Juliet.  
Said he not so? or did I dream it so?

80 Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,  
To think it was so? O, give me thy hand,  
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!  
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave.

A grave? O, no, a lantern, slaughtered youth,  
85 For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes  
This vault a feasting presence full of light.  
Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interred.

[*lays Paris in the tomb*]

How oft when men are at the point of death  
Have they been merry! which their keepers call

90 A lightning before death. O, how may I  
Call this a lightning? O my love! my wife!  
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.  
Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign yet

95 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.  
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?  
O, what more favor can I do to thee  
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain

100 To sunder his that was thine enemy?  
Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,  
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe  
That unsubstantial Death is amorous,  
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
105 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
For fear of that I still will stay with thee  
And never from this palace of dim night

**74–78** Romeo discovers that the man he has just killed is Paris, who he vaguely remembers being told was supposed to marry Juliet.

**82** Romeo notes that, like himself, Paris has been a victim of bad luck.

**84–87** Romeo will bury Paris with Juliet, whose beauty fills the tomb with light. Paris' corpse (**Death**) is being buried (**interred**) by a dead man in that Romeo expects to be dead soon.

**94** **ensign:** sign.

**98–100** **O, what . . . enemy:** I can best repay you (Tybalt) by killing your enemy (myself) with the same hand that cut your youth in two (**twain**).

**102–105** Romeo can't get over how beautiful Juliet still looks. He asks whether Death is loving (**amorous**) and whether it has taken Juliet as its lover (**paramour**).

Depart again. Here, here will I remain  
 With worms that are thy chambermaids. O, here  
 110 Will I set up my everlasting rest  
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars  
 From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!  
 Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you  
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
 115 A dateless bargain to engrossing death!  
 Come, bitter conduct; come, unsavory guide!  
 Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
 The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!  
 Here's to my love! [*drinks*] O true apothecary!  
 120 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.  
 [*falls*]  
 [*Enter Friar Laurence, with lantern, crow, and spade.*]  
**Friar Laurence.** Saint Francis be my speed! how oft tonight  
 Have my old feet stumbled at graves! Who's there?  
**Balthasar.** Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.  
**Friar Laurence.** Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,  
 125 What torch is yond that vainly lends his light  
 To grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,  
 It burneth in the Capels' monument.  
**Balthasar.** It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,  
 One that you love.  
**Friar Laurence.** Who is it?  
**Balthasar.** Romeo.  
 130 **Friar Laurence.** How long hath he been there?  
**Balthasar.** Full half an hour.  
**Friar Laurence.** Go with me to the vault.  
**Balthasar.** I dare not, sir.  
 My master knows not but I am gone hence,  
 And fearfully did menace me with death  
 If I did stay to look on his intents.  
 135 **Friar Laurence.** Stay then; I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me.  
 O, much I fear some ill unthrifty thing.

**111–112 shake . . . flesh:** rid myself of the burden of an unhappy fate (**inauspicious stars**). *On what does Romeo blame his imminent death?*

**115 dateless:** eternal; never-ending. Romeo means that what he is about to do can never be undone.

**117–118** Romeo compares himself to the pilot of a ship (**bark**) who is going to crash on the rocks because he is so weary and sick.

### Language Coach

**Oral Fluency** In line 125, *yond* is short for *yonder*, meaning “over there.” Why is *yond* better than *yonder* in this line?

**132–134 My master . . . intents:** My master told me to go away and threatened me with death if I watched what he did.

**136 unthrifty:** unlucky.

**Balthasar.** As I did sleep under this yew tree here,  
I dreamt my master and another fought,  
And that my master slew him.

**Friar Laurence.** Romeo!

*[stoops and looks on the blood and weapons]*

140 Alack, alack, what blood is this which stains  
The stony entrance of this sepulcher?  
What mean these masterless and gory swords  
To lie discolored by this place of peace?

*[enters the tomb]*

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? What, Paris too?

145 And steeped in blood? Ah, what an unkind hour  
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!  
The lady stirs.

*[Juliet rises.]*

**Juliet.** O comfortable friar! where is my lord?

I do remember well where I should be,

150 And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

**Friar Laurence.** I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest

**140–143 Alack . . . place of peace?** Why are these bloody swords lying here at the tomb (**sepulcher**), a place that should be peaceful? (The swords are also **masterless**, or without their owners.)

**148 comfortable:** comforting.



Romeo and Juliet in the 2004 production of the Globe Theatre

Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep.  
 A greater power than we can contradict  
 Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.  
 155 Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;  
 And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee  
 Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.  
 Stay not to question, for the watch is coming.  
 Come, go, good Juliet. I dare no longer stay.

160 **Juliet.** Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.  
 [*Exit Friar Laurence.*]  
 What's here? A cup, closed in my true love's hand?  
 Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end.  
 O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
 To help me after? I will kiss thy lips.  
 165 Haply some poison yet doth hang on them  
 To make me die with a restorative.  
 [*kisses him*]  
 Thy lips are warm!  
**Chief Watchman** [*within*]. Lead, boy. Which way?  
**Juliet.** Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!  
 [*snatches Romeo's dagger*]

170 This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.  
 [*She stabs herself and falls.*]  
 [*Enter Watchmen with the Page of Paris.*]  
**Page.** This is the place. There, where the torch doth burn.  
**Chief Watchman.** The ground is bloody. Search about the  
 churchyard.  
 Go, some of you; whoe'er you find attach.  
 [*Exeunt some of the Watch.*]  
 Pitiful sight! here lies the County slain;  
 175 And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,  
 Who here hath lain this two days buried.  
 Go, tell the Prince; run to the Capulets;  
 Raise up the Montagues; some others search.  
 [*Exeunt others of the Watch.*]  
 We see the ground whereon these woes do lie,  
 180 But the true ground of all these piteous woes  
 We cannot without circumstance descry.  
 [*Reenter some of the Watch, with Balthasar.*]

**153–154 A greater . . . intents:** A greater force than we can fight (**contradict**) has ruined our plans (**thwarted our intents**).

**156–157 I'll dispose . . . nuns:** I'll find a place for you in a convent of nuns.

**158–159 Why is the friar so anxious to leave?**

**162 timeless:** happening before its proper time.

**163 churl:** miser.

**165 haply:** perhaps.

**173 attach:** arrest.

**178 raise up:** awaken.

**179–181 We see . . . descry:** We see the earth (**ground**) these bodies lie on. But the real cause (**true ground**) of these deaths is yet for us to discover (**descry**).



**Second Watchman.** Here's Romeo's man. We found him in the churchyard.

**Chief Watchman.** Hold him in safety till the Prince come hither.  
[*Reenter Friar Laurence and another Watchman.*]

**Third Watchman.** Here is a friar that trembles, sighs, and weeps.  
185 We took this mattock and this spade from him  
As he was coming from this churchyard side.

**Chief Watchman.** A great suspicion! Stay the friar too.  
[*Enter the Prince and Attendants.*]

**Prince.** What misadventure is so early up,  
That calls our person from our morning rest?  
[*Enter Capulet, Lady Capulet, and others.*]

190 **Capulet.** What should it be, that they so shriek abroad?

**Lady Capulet.** The people in the street cry "Romeo,"  
Some "Juliet," and some "Paris"; and all run,  
With open outcry, toward our monument.

**Prince.** What fear is this which startles in our ears?

195 **Chief Watchman.** Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain;  
And Romeo dead, and Juliet, dead before,  
Warm and new killed.

**Prince.** Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.

**Chief Watchman.** Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man,  
200 With instruments upon them fit to open  
These dead men's tombs.

**Capulet.** O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!  
This dagger hath mista'en, for, lo, his house  
Is empty on the back of Montague,  
205 And it misshathed in my daughter's bosom!

**Lady Capulet.** O me! this sight of death is as a bell  
That warns my old age to a sepulcher.  
[*Enter Montague and others.*]

**Prince.** Come, Montague; for thou art early up  
To see thy son and heir now early down.

210 **Montague.** Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight!  
Grief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath.  
What further woe conspires against mine age?

**Prince.** Look, and thou shalt see.

**Montague.** O thou untaught! what manners is in this,  
215 To press before thy father to a grave?

**182–187** The guards arrest Balthasar and Friar Laurence as suspicious characters.

**194 startles:** causes alarm.

**203–205 This dagger . . . in my daughter's bosom:** This dagger has missed its target. It should rest in the sheath (**house**) that Romeo wears. Instead it is in Juliet's chest.

**210 liege:** lord.

**214–215 what manners . . . grave:** What kind of behavior is this, for a son to die before his father?

**Prince.** Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,  
Till we can clear these ambiguities  
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;  
And then will I be general of your woes  
220 And lead you even to death. Meantime forbear,  
And let mischance be slave to patience.  
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

**Friar Laurence.** I am the greatest, able to do least,  
Yet most suspected, as the time and place  
225 Doth make against me, of this direful murder;  
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge  
Myself condemned and myself excused.

**Prince.** Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

**Friar Laurence.** I will be brief, for my short date of breath  
230 Is not so long as is a tedious tale.  
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;  
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife.  
I married them; and their stol'n marriage day  
Was Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death  
235 Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from this city;  
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.  
You, to remove that siege of grief from her,  
Betrothed and would have married her perforce  
To County Paris. Then comes she to me  
240 And with wild looks bid me devise some mean  
To rid her from this second marriage,  
Or in my cell there would she kill herself.  
Then gave I her (so tutored by my art)  
A sleeping potion; which so took effect  
245 As I intended, for it wrought on her  
The form of death. Meantime I writ to Romeo  
That he should hither come as this dire night  
To help to take her from her borrowed grave,  
Being the time the potion's force should cease.  
250 But he which bore my letter, Friar John,  
Was stayed by accident, and yesternight  
Returned my letter back. Then all alone  
At the prefixed hour of her waking  
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;  
255 Meaning to keep her closely at my cell  
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo.  
But when I came, some minute ere the time  
Of her awaking, here untimely lay  
The noble Paris and true Romeo dead.  
260 She wakes; and I entreated her come forth

**216–221 Seal . . . patience:** Stop your emotional outbursts until we can find out the source (**spring**) of these confusing events (**ambiguities**). Wait (**forbear**) and be patient, and let's find out what happened.

**223–227** Friar Laurence confesses that he is most responsible for these events. He will both accuse (**impeach**) himself and clear (**purge**) himself of guilt.

### Language Coach

**Multiple Meanings** The word *date* means something other than “day of the month” in line 229; it means “the length of time something lasts.” What does Friar Laurence mean by “my short date of breath”?

**236** It was Romeo's banishment, not Tybalt's death, that made Juliet so sad.

**248 borrowed:** temporary.

**254 kindred's:** family's.

And bear this work of heaven with patience;  
 But then a noise did scare me from the tomb,  
 And she, too desperate, would not go with me,  
 But, as it seems, did violence on herself.

265 All this I know, and to the marriage  
 Her nurse is privy; and if aught in this  
 Miscarried by my fault, let my old life  
 Be sacrificed, some hour before his time,  
 Unto the rigor of severest law.

270 **Prince.** We still have known thee for a holy man.  
 Where's Romeo's man? What can he say in this?

**Balthasar.** I brought my master news of Juliet's death;  
 And then in post he came from Mantua  
 To this same place, to this same monument.

275 This letter he early bid me give his father,  
 And threatened me with death, going in the vault,  
 If I departed not and left him there.

**Prince.** Give me the letter. I will look on it.  
 Where is the County's page that raised the watch?

280 Sirrah, what made your master in this place?

**Page.** He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave;  
 And bid me stand aloof, and so I did.  
 Anon comes one with light to ope the tomb;  
 And by-and-by my master drew on him;

285 And then I ran away to call the watch.

**Prince.** This letter doth make good the friar's words,  
 Their course of love, the tidings of her death;  
 And here he writes that he did buy a poison  
 Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal

290 Came to this vault to die and lie with Juliet.  
 Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague,  
 See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,  
 That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!  
 And I, for winking at your discords too,

295 Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished. **F**

**Capulet.** O brother Montague, give me thy hand.  
 This is my daughter's jointure, for no more  
 Can I demand.

**265–269 and to . . . law:** Her nurse can bear witness to this secret marriage. If I am responsible for any of this, let the law punish me with death.

**270** *How does the Prince respond to the friar's acceptance of blame?*

**273 in post:** at full speed.

**279–280** The Prince asks for Paris' servant, who notified the guards (**raised the watch**). Then he asks the servant why Paris was at the cemetery.

**283–285 Anon . . . call the watch:** Soon (**anon**) someone with a light came and opened the tomb. Paris drew his sword, and I ran to call the guards.

**292–295 See what . . . punished:** Look at the punishment your hatred has brought on you. Heaven has killed your children (**joys**) with love. For shutting my eyes to your arguments (**discords**), I have lost two relatives. We have all been punished.

**F TRAGEDY**

Reread lines 291–295. On what does the prince blame all the deaths? What **theme**, or message, might this passage suggest?

**297–298 jointure:** dowry, the payment a bride's father traditionally made to the groom. Capulet means that no one could demand more of a bride's father than he has already paid.

**Montague.** But I can give thee more;  
For I will raise her statue in pure gold,  
300 That whiles Verona by that name is known,  
There shall no figure at such rate be set  
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

**Capulet.** As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie—  
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

305 **Prince.** A glooming peace this morning with it brings.  
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.  
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished;  
For never was a story of more woe  
310 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

[*Exeunt.*]

301 at such rate be set: be valued so highly.

303–304 Capulet promises to do for Romeo what Montague will do for Juliet. Their children have become sacrifices to their hatred (**enmity**).



The Capulets and Lord Montague mourn their children's deaths in an Austin, Texas, high school production.



## Comprehension

- Recall** What prevents Friar John from delivering the letter to Romeo?
- Recall** Why does Paris attack Romeo at the Capulets' tomb?
- Summarize** How do the bodies of Paris, Romeo, and Juliet all end up in the Capulets' tomb? Explain how each character loses his or her life.



**READING 4** Explain how dramatic conventions enhance dramatic text.

**RC-9(A)** Reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension.

## Literary Analysis

- Reading Shakespearean Drama** In Shakespearean drama, the **resolution**, or final plot stage, occurs in the last act. Look back at the chart you completed as you read. Describe the events that make up the resolution of this tragedy. Do you think this sequence of events brings the play to a satisfying conclusion? Explain.
- Make Judgments** In the play's final speech, Prince Escalus declares, "Some shall be pardoned, and some punished." If you were the ruler of Verona, whom would you pardon, and whom would you punish? Explain.
- Identify Soliloquy** Identify a soliloquy in Act Five. Citing specific lines of the play, explain what you learn about the character who is speaking.
- Analyze Tragedy** In a tragedy, the hero or heroine usually has a character flaw that leads to his or her downfall. Is this true of Romeo and Juliet? Cite evidence from the tragedy to support your explanation.
- Examine Universal Theme** Many of the themes in *Romeo and Juliet* are universal, meaning they are still relevant today. Examine the values and experiences shown, and think about how each is presented in *Romeo and Juliet*. Complete the chart by stating how each topic is conveyed as a theme in the play.

<i>Value or Experience</i>	<i>Statement of Theme</i>
Fate	<i>There are forces in life over which people have no control.</i>
Family ties	
Friendship	
Love	

## Literary Criticism

- Critical Interpretations** About *Romeo and Juliet*, the critic F. M. Dickey maintains, "love overshadows [hate] dramatically, since it is the passion of the protagonists and since Shakespeare has lavished his most moving poetry upon the love scenes." Do you agree? Support your conclusion with evidence.

### Is LOVE stronger than HATE?

What consequences can arise from hating someone?

## Conventions in Writing

### ◆ GRAMMAR AND STYLE: Create Rhythm

Review the **Grammar and Style** note on page 1066. **Parallelism** is the repetition of grammatical structures—phrases or clauses, for example. Shakespeare’s use of parallelism creates **cadence**, or a balanced, rhythmic flow. Here are two examples from the play. The first contains a series of four past-tense verbs, each followed by the word *for*. In the second, Shakespeare uses the three parallel adjectives *stiff*, *stark*, and *cold*. Think about how these passages might sound without the parallelism.

*First Servant.* You are **looked for and called for, asked for and sought for**, in the great chamber. (Act One, Scene 5, lines 10–11)

*Friar Laurence.* . . . Each part, deprived of supple government, Shall, **stiff and stark and cold**, appear like death; (Act Four, Scene 1, lines 102–103)

Now consider how the revision in blue makes use of parallelism to improve the rhythm of this first draft. Revise your response to the prompt below by using parallelism whenever possible.

#### STUDENT MODEL

Goodbye my love, I am going to die.  
*Farewell my love*  
~~Take care my dear, I leave you forever.~~

### READING-WRITING CONNECTION



Increase your understanding of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* by responding to this prompt. Then use the **revising tip** to improve your writing.

#### WRITING PROMPT

##### Short Response: Write A Blank Verse Poem

What if Romeo had taken slower-acting poison? Imagine that Juliet wakes before the poison kills Romeo, so that he is able to utter his last words of love to her. Write **six to eight lines of a short blank verse poem** in which Romeo says goodbye to Juliet before dying.

#### REVISING TIP

Review your poem. Does your poem have a balanced, rhythmic flow? If not, consider using parallelism to create cadence.



**WRITING 14B** Write a poem using a variety of poetic techniques and a variety of poetic forms.

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