

insight SHAKESPEARE PLAYS



Romeo & Juliet

The Complete Play

William Shakespeare

Shane Barnes & Aidan Coleman



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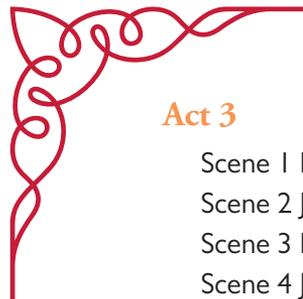
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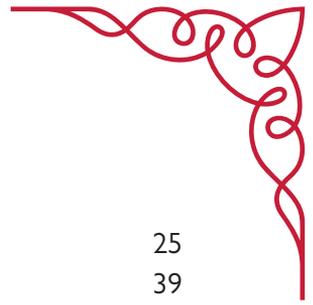
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Introduction

Who was Shakespeare?



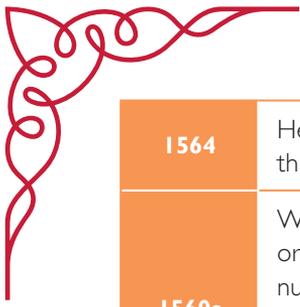
The Chandos Portrait of William Shakespeare

Shakespeare was neither a king nor a lord, and this is the reason we know little about him. While historians and writers made an effort to record the details of the lives of those born into noble families (kings, queens, ladies and lords), they were not generally interested in the important details of other people's lives. In his time Shakespeare was a famous playwright, but perhaps no more famous than some other London playwrights like Ben Jonson or Christopher Marlowe. Little effort was made to record the details of Shakespeare's life until some 50 years after his death.

Did Shakespeare write Shakespeare?

Nearly all scholars agree that we have enough evidence to confirm that William Shakespeare, the man born in Stratford-upon-Avon, was the author of the plays and poems attributed to him. However, a few other theories exist as to who wrote the plays. Some authors who have been suggested include Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford; Christopher Marlowe (a talented playwright who died in 1593 but who conspiracy theorists claim may have faked his own death); Francis Bacon (a philosopher and scientist); and even Queen Elizabeth I.

There are a number of problems with all of these theories and very little evidence to support them. No-one doubted Shakespeare was the author of the plays and poems until 200 years after his death and these theories are usually based on the argument that Shakespeare was not university-educated.



1564	He was baptised on 26 April 1564; it is likely that he was born three days before this on 23 April (St George's Day).
1560s	<p>William's parents, John and Anne, were possibly both illiterate (they couldn't read or write). His father, John Shakespeare, was a glove maker and was involved in a number of other business activities. He became a member of the town council when Shakespeare was very young.</p> <p>Shakespeare was John and Anne's third child. He had seven brothers and sisters but only five of them survived to adulthood.</p>
1571	It is believed that Shakespeare entered the King's New Grammar School in Stratford around the age of seven. Shakespeare's school days would have begun at six in the morning in summer and seven in winter and they would have finished at five in the evening (Monday to Saturday). The school would have been very strict and students could have expected to be beaten for misbehaving or showing any signs of laziness.
1578	Shakespeare probably left school at 14 or 15. His father owed quite a few people money by this time, and, for this reason, William was unable to attend university.
1582	At age 18, he married 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. They had three children – Susanna, and twins Judith and Hamnet (Hamnet died when he was only 11).
1590s	<p>We are unsure what Shakespeare did in his early twenties. There are stories of his being employed by a rich landowner in the north of England. It is possible that he joined a travelling company of actors. We do know that by the early 1590s he was a popular playwright in London; in 1594 he invested in the acting company of which he was a member (The Lord Chamberlain's Men), becoming a part-owner.</p> <p>Through the 1590s Shakespeare wrote a number of poems and many of his most popular plays including <i>Richard III</i>, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>. He acted in some of his own plays and those of other playwrights.</p> <p>In 1596 Shakespeare obtained a coat of arms for his father, which meant that he would be officially regarded as a gentleman. In the following year, Shakespeare bought New Place, the second largest house in Stratford-upon-Avon.</p>
1600s	<p>The first decade of the 1600s was his most productive period, when he wrote most of his greatest plays, including <i>Hamlet</i>, <i>Othello</i>, <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>King Lear</i>.</p> <p>In 1603 Shakespeare's company became the King's Men and regularly performed at Court before King James from this time. During this decade he bought more properties around London and the Stratford area and became very wealthy.</p>
1613	In 1613 Shakespeare returned to Stratford-upon-Avon but still travelled to London occasionally to look after his business interests.
1616	He died on his 52nd birthday (23 April 1616) and was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

Elizabethan England

Shakespeare arrived in London some time between 1585 and 1592. The city had a population of about 200 000 and was growing fast. It was an exciting time to live there as the city was full of foreign merchants and explorers, who were returning with spices and stories of exotic countries. It was also a time when the modern scientific method was being developed, which was based on observation and experiment. Many new discoveries were made, particularly in the areas of anatomy, mathematics and astronomy.

Unlike today, when the people of England vote for a government, England was ruled by a monarch, Elizabeth I, and her advisers. She had been Queen since 1558, six years before Shakespeare's birth. She was very popular with the people and was celebrated for her knowledge of literature and art.

Elizabethan society was divided into two broad groups: the 'gentle' population who governed the country (including earls, lords, ladies and gentlemen), and the 'base' or 'knaves' who made up most of the population. People were born into a certain class and marriages between people of different classes were reasonably rare. Occasionally the Queen knighted or even ennobled a person of lesser rank. While the 'gentle' were generally wealthy, some businessmen of lower rank were also beginning to make their fortunes during this time.

In the 1500s, virtually everyone believed in a God who created and controlled the universe. Elizabethans believed in a divine order called the Great Chain of Being. In this way of seeing the world, God ruled the universe and below Him were a number of angels. The Queen was the highest earthly rank in the Chain of Being; beneath her were nobles and lesser lords, and below them the rest of the population. This chain



The Darnley Portrait of Elizabeth I, c. 1570



Illustration from 1579 of the Great Chain of Being

extended further to the animal and then the plant kingdoms. Such an idea was used to reinforce the class system: everything had its place in the chain and people believed that upsetting this order in any way would cause chaos. People's class was even made clear through the clothing they wore, which was governed by strict laws.

Elizabethans were quite superstitious. Many of them believed in fairies and witches whom they blamed for unexplained mishaps. Elizabethans would worry if a black cat crossed their path, and avoid walking beneath ladders because this was considered bad luck. It was generally believed that the Earth was the centre of the universe and that, in their motion around the Earth, the planets made musical notes that together formed a perfect harmony. Elizabethans believed that the constellations and other heavenly bodies, including the moon, influenced human events and held clues

for the future. Even Queen Elizabeth I consulted an astrologer before deciding on the date for her coronation.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, England, like most other European countries, was Roman Catholic. Under Queen Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, the country broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and formed the Protestant Church of England. Although England briefly became Catholic again under Queen Mary, the country remained Protestant from the time of Elizabeth onwards. This meant Elizabeth I, instead of the Pope, ruled over the English Church. English priests were allowed to marry and services were carried out in English rather than Latin.

In the early 1500s the British had very little confidence in the English language. Latin, the language of the Roman Catholic Church, was used for scholarship and most serious literature. However, as the century progressed, there emerged a new confidence that the English language could express important thoughts and feelings. A translation of the Bible into English by William Tyndale became a bestseller and was widely distributed, thanks to the reasonably recent technology of the printing press. There was also a rise in patriotism as England became an important world power. In 1588 the English navy won a famous victory over the Spanish Armada, which was believed to be the greatest naval power in the world at the time.



The New Globe Theatre

This period in history is often described as the English Renaissance (rebirth) because it was a time not only of great advances in science, but also of great achievements in art. At the centre of this achievement was the growth of the English theatres. Before 1570, acting companies had toured the country, looking for work where they could find it and performing in marketplaces or the inn yards at local taverns. However, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, a number of theatres were built across London to service a new population that was hungry for entertainment. By the time Shakespeare arrived in London, there were numerous theatres catering to audiences of thousands. If he had arrived in London at a different time, he might never have become the famous playwright we know him as today.

A day at the theatre, London 1599

Imagine you could go back to London on a Saturday afternoon in September 1599. It is a warm sunny day with a slight breeze blowing in from the country. You decide to avoid the crowds flowing over London Bridge, choosing instead to be rowed across the River Thames (pronounced Temz) in one of the many water taxis. There are dozens of similar boats making their way across the river from the main city to Southwark.

Southwark is a poor, overcrowded suburb filled with hastily built houses and flats. This is where immigrants from other parts of England or overseas come to live when they first arrive in London because it's cheap and no-one asks questions. It is full of workshops and young apprentices and you notice an overly high number of beggars. It is also the location for five of London's prisons, including that most notorious prison: the Clink.



Panorama of London by Claes Van Visscher, 1616

More importantly, Southwark is London's entertainment district. This is largely because it is outside the control of the city officials and their strict laws. The streets are packed with bowling alleys, brothels and taverns, where you can drink, or gamble illegally on dice, backgammon or cards. Here you can see all sorts of professional entertainers, from acrobats and clowns to musicians and puppeteers. You can also see some sickeningly violent entertainment. In the bear-baiting rings you are likely to see a bear or bull being attacked by vicious dogs. But you haven't crossed the river to see any of these things. You are here to see a play.

As you near the theatre, it is the smells you notice: roasting meats and pies mingle with the ever-present stench of horse dung, human sweat and sewage. Then you turn a corner, and there it is, standing thirty metres high: the Globe Theatre. The building is almost round in shape and white, criss-crossed with timbers. Above the brown thatched roof a white flag ripples in the breeze.

Today's play is *Romeo and Juliet*. It's a few years old now but still very popular. It costs just a penny to enter. This is about a tenth of the average worker's daily wage, which makes it cheaper than a movie today. As you pass beneath the entrance you read the words *Totus mundus agit histrionem*: the whole world is a playhouse.

Inside, three tiers of gallery seating wrap around the stage. If you pay another penny, you can buy yourself a seat in one of

the lower tiers, or for sixpence you can purchase one of the best seats in the upper galleries. This is where the upper classes sit: the gentlemen, lords and ladies.

The stage is raised about one and a half metres above the ground. Like the seats in the galleries, the performance area is covered. The ceiling, which they call the heavens, is painted with stars. You notice there are very few props of any sort and no backdrops or scenery: just a curtain at the back of the stage, and above this three balcony areas that face the audience. These are the most expensive seats in the house, where people sit to be seen.

The Globe is now almost full with 3000 noisy people. You find a place off to the side of the stage. You'll have to stand for two or three hours but you've done that before at plenty of concerts. There are no toilets, and you will need to keep a careful eye on your bag.

The audience around you are poorer Londoners, the groundlings. You'll find they're a lot like a crowd at the football but rougher. They will eat, drink and talk throughout the performance and will shout out or boo if they don't like what's happening.

When the actors come on you'll find they speak very quickly, but you'll be able to hear them clearly where you are. If you look very closely you may even notice something strange about the female characters. All of the parts are played by men, and female characters, like Juliet, are played by boys whose voices have not yet broken. Theatre companies are considered too dangerous for women, and they won't be permitted onstage for another 60 years.

Anyway, it's almost 2 o'clock and the performance is about to begin ...



Interior of the New Globe Theatre



Sources and settings

It often surprises people to hear that Shakespeare did not invent the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. The earliest known version of the story, published in 1476, was written by an Italian novelist, Masuccio Salernitano.

In 1562, an English writer, Arthur Brooke, rewrote the story as a poem. Shakespeare's play closely resembles the plot of Brooke's poem but the language Shakespeare uses is far more interesting. It is Shakespeare's version of *Romeo and Juliet* that has become the best-loved and most famous throughout the world.

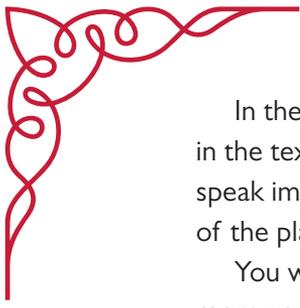
Romeo and Juliet was first performed between 1594 and 1596 but it is set earlier, during the Italian Renaissance. The Renaissance (approximately 1300–1600) was a time when much of the learning from ancient Greece and Rome that had been lost after the fall of the Roman Empire was rediscovered. It was a time of great achievements in art, architecture and the sciences. This movement began later in England, during the 1500s. Shakespeare lived and worked during the height of the English Renaissance.

The play is set in the Italian city of Verona. Italy was not a nation in the 1400s. Instead there were city-states, each of which had its own ruler and laws (much like separate countries). These Italian cities were generally very wealthy due to trade with the Byzantine Empire and the Middle East. The most important of these city-states, like Florence and Venice, had large populations and ruled surrounding territories. Verona was one of the smaller city-states.

Many Italian cities were famous for bitter disputes and family feuds similar to the one in *Romeo and Juliet*. Montague and Capulet are the names of two ancient families mentioned in a medieval Italian poem called *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, but the two families never lived in the same city.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is an ancient story, but it would not be the best source to read for an accurate picture of life in an Italian city. It is unlikely Shakespeare ever visited Italy. He would have learnt most of what he knew about the area either from books or from Italians who passed through London.

Geographical and historical details were not very important to Shakespeare. In some of his plays he confuses geographical locations and he sometimes uses historical details selectively or even incorrectly. Although Shakespeare's plays are set in a variety of exciting locations such as Greece, Denmark, Egypt and Italy, they tell us most about life in Shakespeare's England.



In these lines, Mercutio completes Romeo's iambic pentameter. This is shown in the text by indenting some of the characters' lines. The person reading will speak immediately after Romeo to complete the rhythm of the line. The heart of the play does not stop beating.

You will not necessarily be able to pick this rhythm straight away, but the more you read Shakespeare, the more you will develop a feel for iambic pentameter.

b. Prose

While most of Shakespeare's plays are written in verse (or poetry), he sometimes chooses to have his characters speak in prose. This is the sort of writing we find in novels or newspaper articles and it doesn't necessarily have a clear rhythm.

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 civil with the maids, and cut off their heads.	
GREGORY	The heads of the maids?	(Act 1 Scene 1)

Prose often indicates that a character is of a lower class than the other characters. In Shakespeare's plays, servants typically speak in prose. Mercutio, though, is an exception to this rule. He is not a servant, he is the Prince's cousin, and yet he speaks mostly in prose throughout the play. This is probably because Shakespeare wishes to present him as a rebel who refuses to conform to the expectations of society and the use of prose reinforces this.

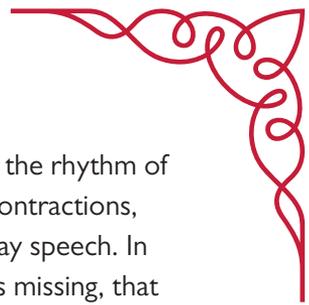
Prose passages tend to be less formal, have a chattier feel, and can be quite fast-paced.

c. Dramatic pauses

Shakespeare sometimes leaves a line of iambic pentameter incomplete, breaking the rhythm of the text.

JULIET	Come, vial. What if this mixture do not work at all?	(Act 4 Scene 3)
--------	---	-----------------

These irregular lines are constructed on purpose by Shakespeare to highlight aspects such as dramatic tension. Leaving the line with two beats instead of the usual ten allows time for the characters to pause or perhaps to do something during the moment of silence. Here it may be that Juliet spends some time staring at the vial, which contains a potion that she believes might kill her.



d. Contractions and accents

Sometimes Shakespeare uses **contractions** in order to preserve the rhythm of iambic pentameter. Contractions are shortened words. You use contractions, such as don't (short for do not) and haven't (have not), in everyday speech. In each of these examples, an apostrophe indicates that something is missing, that the word has been shortened.

'tis (it is) she'll (she will) o'er (over) know'st (knowest)

At other times, Shakespeare *adds* a syllable or a beat to a word to make it fit the iambic pentameter. This is indicated in the text by an accent mark above the extra syllable.

movèd [MOV-ed] (two beats instead of one)
banishèd [BAN-ish-ED] (three beats instead of two)

e. Rhyme

When Shakespeare writes in rhyming verse, it is always for a reason. For example, when Romeo and Juliet first meet, they fall in love at first sight and Shakespeare captures their feelings by having both characters speak to each other in rhyming verse.

ROMEO	<i>[To JULIET]</i> If I profane with my unwortheist 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.
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. (Act 1 Scene 5)

Sometimes, Shakespeare ends a scene with a **rhyming couplet** (two consecutive lines that rhyme). For example:

JULIET	Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, That I shall say good night till it be morrow. (Act 2 Scene 2)
--------	--

Ending a scene with a rhyming couplet helped the audience know that they could fidget a little, and also may have been a cue to the actors that they were soon due on stage for the next scene.



Important vocabulary

You can enjoy Shakespeare without understanding every word, but it is still a good idea to learn the words that are used regularly throughout the play. Some like 'tyrant', 'civil' or 'haste' are still used frequently today, but others such as 'beseech' or 'yonder' are not used as often.

You might like to begin a vocabulary list of your own. Here are some examples you could add.

Ay: (pronounced eye) Yes

Occasionally a character will use the phrase 'ay me,' which should be read as an exclamation of weariness or anguish, like a sigh.

Beseech: (pronounced *be-seech* – rhymes with beach): Beg or request forcefully (entreat)

Chide: (pronounced to rhyme with ride): Tell off or criticise

Civil: Public

Ere: (pronounced *air*): Before

Haste: (pronounced to rhyme with waste): Great speed

When Juliet wishes for the Friar to marry them quickly, she tells him to 'make haste' or hurry up.

Hence: Away from here

Hie: (pronounced *high*): Hurry or go quickly

Kinsmen / Kin / Kindred: Relatives

Shrift: (pronounced to rhyme with drift): Confession of sins before a priest

Thou: You; **Thy:** Your

Tyrant: (pronounced *tie-rant*): A cruel, violent or wicked person

Wherefore: Why

When Juliet famously asks, 'O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?' she is not enquiring where Romeo is but why he has to be a Montague, the son of her enemy.

Yonder / Yond / Yon: Over there

The characters

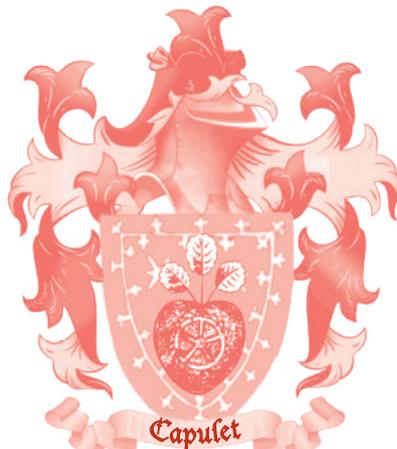


THE TWO WARRING HOUSEHOLDS

THE MONTAGUES



THE CAPULETS



Montague: Head of the Montague household

Lady Montague: The wife of Montague and mother of Romeo

Romeo: The Montagues' son, and later the husband of Juliet

Benvolio: The nephew of Montague; Romeo's cousin and friend

Balthasar: Servant to Romeo or page (sometimes referred to as Romeo's 'man')

Abraham: Servant of the Montague household

Capulet: Head of the Capulet household

Lady Capulet: The wife of Capulet and mother of Juliet

Juliet: The Capulets' daughter and later the wife of Romeo

Tybalt: Nephew of the Capulets and a bitter opponent of the Montagues

Nurse: A servant of the Capulet household, who has been Juliet's nurse since her birth

Sampson: Servant of the Capulet household

Gregory: Servant of the Capulet household

Peter: Servant to Capulet

Other characters

Prince Escalus: The Prince of Verona, who wants to restore peace to the city

Paris: A young nobleman, and a relative of the Prince, who wants to marry Juliet

Mercutio: A relative of the Prince and a close friend of Romeo and Benvolio

Friar Laurence: A priest from whom Romeo and Juliet seek advice

Also: Chorus, Friar John, apothecary, as well as various servants, musicians, pages, officers, citizens, watchmen, maskers, attendants and relatives of both households.

Prologue

A prologue is like an introduction. In Shakespeare's time, this speech would have been spoken by a single character known as the Chorus.

Read the Prologue aloud several times before you worry too much about its meaning ...

V

Mutiny:	Violence
Civil:	Public
From forth:	Bred from
Star-crossed:	Unfortunate or ill-fated
Nought:	Nothing

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.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes 5
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,
And the continuance of their parents' rage, 10
Which, but their children's end, nought 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]



- 7 **Misadventured piteous overthrows:** Unlucky and sad disasters.
13-14 **The which ... strive to mend:** The audience is encouraged to listen carefully so that what they might have missed in the Prologue they will understand during the performance.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Where is the play set?
- 2 How long would the audience expect the performance to take?
- 3 List three things you think might happen in the play.
- 4 By reading the Prologue we know that the couple (Romeo and Juliet) will die. Why do you think Shakespeare chooses to give away the ending?
- 5 How might this affect the way we read or view the play?



DISCUSS

The Prologue in this case is also a type of poem called a **sonnet**. After reading the Prologue again, write down what you think the rules for writing a sonnet might be.

Franco Zeffirelli and Baz Luhrmann: DVD Chapter 1 (the Prologue)



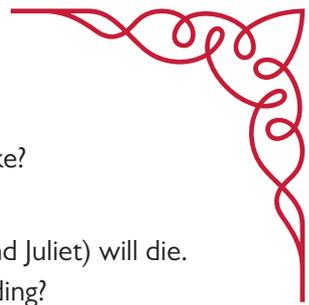
PRESS PLAY

Watch the Prologue in the Franco Zeffirelli (1968) and Baz Luhrmann (1996) film versions of *Romeo and Juliet*.

- 1 Brainstorm ways that Zeffirelli and Luhrmann introduce the Prologue differently to the audience. Create a table to record your answers.

Zeffirelli (1968)	Luhrmann (1996)

- 2 Which one of these film versions do you think is more effective in helping the modern audience understand what is going on? Explain.





Act summaries for *Romeo and Juliet*

Act 1

The play begins in Verona with a fight between two rival families: the Montagues and the Capulets. The Prince ends the fighting and threatens punishment of death to anyone who causes another brawl. Romeo is upset because Rosaline, the woman he loves, is not interested in him. Benvolio persuades him to attend a masked ball at the Capulets' house, suggesting that there he might discover someone he will love even more. At the ball, Romeo meets Juliet and they fall in love instantly. Tybalt (a Capulet) realises that Romeo (a Montague) has gatecrashed the party, and plans to take revenge on him. We also learn that Paris wishes to marry Juliet.

Act 2

After the masked ball, Romeo leaves his friends and sneaks into the Capulet orchard. Below Juliet's balcony window, he overhears Juliet declare her love for him. The two talk until sunrise, and decide to marry that day. Romeo rushes to Friar Laurence to arrange a secret wedding and passes the marriage details on to Juliet through her Nurse. The act ends with the couple about to be married by Friar Laurence.

Act 3

Tybalt challenges Romeo to a duel but Romeo, now married, refuses to fight. Mercutio fights instead and, when Romeo holds him back, is fatally wounded by Tybalt. In a rage, Romeo kills Tybalt and is consequently banished from Verona. Romeo and Juliet secretly spend the night together in the Capulet house before Romeo leaves for Mantua that morning. Juliet's parents tell her they have arranged for her to be married to Paris in a few days time. She refuses to marry him and argues with her parents.

Act 4

The Friar gives Juliet a potion so she can avoid marrying Paris. He tells her that it will make her seem dead, but that she will awake later, in her family tomb. Juliet returns home, tells her parents she will marry Paris, and drinks the potion that night. The next morning the Capulets find Juliet and believe she is dead.

Act 5

The Friar sends a letter to Romeo but the message is delayed, and Romeo, therefore, is not informed of the plan. Romeo's servant, Balthasar, arrives in Mantua and tells Romeo of Juliet's death. Heartbroken, Romeo buys poison. He arrives at Juliet's tomb and fights and kills Paris, who is at the tomb mourning her death. Then, at Juliet's side, Romeo kills himself. When she awakes and finds Romeo dead, Juliet also commits suicide. The Montagues and Capulets, united in grief, decide to make peace.

Quick questions!



QUESTIONS

Spend a few minutes answering these questions in pairs or as a class.

- 1 What are the names of the two rival families?
- 2 Who breaks up the brawl?
- 3 What are future brawlers threatened with?
- 4 With whom is Romeo in love at the beginning of the play?
- 5 Whom does Romeo meet at a party that changes this?
- 6 Why is Tybalt angered by Romeo being at the party?
- 7 Who else, besides Romeo, wishes to marry Juliet?
- 8 Which character marries Romeo and Juliet in secret?
- 9 How is Mercutio killed?
- 10 Why does Romeo kill Tybalt?
- 11 What is the consequence of this?
- 12 Whom did Juliet's parents organise for her to marry?
- 13 What don't her parents know that the audience does?
- 14 How does Juliet hope to avoid a second marriage?
- 15 Why doesn't the Friar's plan to reunite Romeo and Juliet work?
- 16 What does Romeo decide to do when he is told Juliet is dead?
- 17 What does Juliet do when she wakes to find Romeo dead?
- 18 What final effect do the deaths of Romeo and Juliet have on the two rival families?



Freeze-frames

The recommended time allocation for this task (preparation and performance) is approximately 50–60 minutes in total.

Present the play in five freeze-frames (one for each act) in groups of five to seven students.

Instructions

- Read carefully through the summaries for each act.
- Work out how you will present the action of each act in a single ‘frozen’ pose.
- Choose to represent a character, an event or even an idea. You may strike a pose in which you are doing two things at once.
- When instructed, present Act 1. Your teacher will then ask you to CHANGE and then FREEZE for your representation of Act 2. This will continue until you have represented all five acts.
- Don’t take longer than 15 seconds between acts so make sure you practise your changeovers before you present your freeze-frames to the class.
- Make sure you can explain what you represent, who you are or what you are doing when you present your freeze-frames to the class.

Optional

- Photograph your five freeze-frames, and write a caption below each photograph to explain which act is being presented. These can be completed for display purposes in your classroom.
- Alternatively, print your photographs but do not label them. Display them in your classroom and ask students from other groups to organise your photographs into what they think is the correct order of the five-act play.

Act 1

Act 1 Scene 1 (Part 1)

CHARACTERS

Sampson
Prince
Gregory
Abraham
Tybalt
Benvolio
Capulet
Officer
Lady Capulet
Lord Montague
Lady Montague
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

The play begins with two Capulets, Gregory and Sampson, joking about their hatred for the Montagues. As they pass two of the Montagues, they decide to insult them. Just as a brawl breaks out, Benvolio (a Montague) arrives and attempts to stop the fight, but almost immediately Tybalt (a Capulet) enters and insults him, restarting the brawl. The Prince arrives and restores peace. He threatens that anyone who breaks the peace again will be put to death.

Before you read

- In this scene there is a lot of joking about sex, fighting and cowardice. Keep in mind when you read the lines that these are cocky teenagers. It is not important that you understand every insult but rather the tone of the dispute and general details of the action. The language used by teenagers tends to date quickly and this is certainly the case with some of the words used here. The four lines which open the scene play on words like 'coal', 'colliers', 'choler' and 'collar'; they have lost some of their meaning and are often cut in modern performances.
- Look out for the use of dashes (–) that show an interruption in the flow of the conversation. For example, in line 65, Montague is confronting Capulet but is also talking to his wife: 'Thou villain, Capulet! – Hold me not; let me go!'
- When the characters use the word 'sir', they are not being polite but sarcastic, and the word should be delivered in a mocking tone. Think of the way you might call someone who is being too demanding or thinking a lot of himself 'your majesty'.

- When Capulet says, 'Give me my long sword, ho!' (line 61), he is not using the word 'ho' to refer to his wife in the insulting way a gangster rapper might! 'Ho' is a word of exclamation, like 'hey' or 'oi' or even 'now', and fills out the rhythm of the line (see **Blank verse and iambic pentameter**, page 11).

V

An: If
Quarrel: A fight
Marry: An expression similar to 'really' or 'exactly', referring to the Virgin Mary
List: Like or wish
Partisans: Long spears

Verona. A public place.

[Two servants of the Capulet household, SAMPSON and GREGORY, enter, armed with swords and bucklers]

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 o' the collar.
 SAMPSON I strike quickly, being moved. 5
 GREGORY But thou art not quickly moved to strike.
 SAMPSON A dog of the house of Montague moves me.
 GREGORY To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand; therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away.
 SAMPSON A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will take the wall 10
 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 vessels, are ever thrust to the wall; therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall. 15
 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 civil with the maids, and cut off their heads.
 GREGORY The heads of the maids?

1-4 **Gregory, on my word ... your neck out o' the collar:** 'To carry coals' is to tolerate insults but despite this being Sampson's intended meaning, Gregory jokes that 'carrying coals' would make them 'colliers' or coalminers. Sampson continues the punning with the word 'choler', meaning anger, and Gregory completes the pun with the word 'collar', a slang term for a hangman's noose. If they are too hasty in drawing their swords, the consequence could be the hangman's noose.

12-20 **That shows thee a weak slave ... maidenheads:** In this series of puns, Sampson asserts that once he has dealt with the Capulet men, he will thrust the women against the wall in an act of sexual violence. 'Maidenhead' refers to a woman's virginity. Note that he is using the word 'civil' ironically: his behaviour will be anything but civil.

SAMPSON Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads; take it in what sense thou wilt. 20

GREGORY They must take it in sense that feel it.

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. 25

Draw thy tool! Here comes two of the house of the Montagues.

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! 30

SAMPSON Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

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 a disgrace to them, if they bear it.

[ABRAHAM and BALTHASAR enter]

ABRAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir? 35

SAMPSON I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON *[Aside to GREGORY]* Is the law of our side, if I say ay?

GREGORY No.

SAMPSON No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir. 40

GREGORY Do you quarrel, sir?

ABRAHAM Quarrel, sir! No, sir.

SAMPSON If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you.

ABRAHAM No better.

SAMPSON Well, sir. 45

GREGORY Say 'better': here comes one of my master's kinsmen.

SAMPSON Yes, better, sir.

ABRAHAM You lie.

SAMPSON Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.

[They fight. BENVOLIO enters]

BENVOLIO Part, fools! 50

Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

[BENVOLIO beats down their swords, after which TYBALT enters]

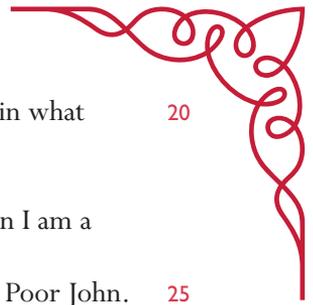
23–24 **I am a pretty piece of flesh:** I have an attractive body.

25 **Poor John:** A salted, dried fish often associated in Shakespeare's day with poor sexual performance.

31 **Take the law of our sides:** Stay on the right side of the law.

33–34 **Which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it:** Biting your thumb at someone was insulting and would not be tolerated.

51 **Put up your swords:** Raise your swords so that they are not dangerously pointing at someone.



And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeeming ornaments,
To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate.
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time, all the rest depart away.
You Capulet, shall go along with me,
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our further pleasure in this case,
To old Freetown, our common judgment place.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

80

85

[All exit, except MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE and BENVOLIO]



79–81 Cast by their grave beseeeming ... To part your cankered hate: The Prince fears an escalation of violence as the citizens wield weapons and take matters into their own hands to stop the brawling between the Montagues and Capulets.

83 Forfeit: Giving up or destroying (the peace of the place).



Give me my long sword, ho!

Fighting and weapons

Both Renaissance Italy and Shakespeare's England were violent societies. Brawls and knife-fights were common in the taverns and bars in which Shakespeare would have drunk, and out on the streets. During Shakespeare's lifetime, the famous playwright Christopher Marlowe was stabbed to death in a tavern, and Shakespeare's friend, the playwright Ben Jonson, narrowly escaped being executed for killing a man in a knife-fight.

Actors and playwrights who worked in rough neighbourhoods weren't the only ones at risk. It was common to go about the streets armed. Women in particular were not likely to leave home without taking a small dagger (called a bodkin) with them for their own protection.

In the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet* a number of different weapons are mentioned. Capulet asks for a long-sword, which was old-fashioned even then. It was very heavy so Capulet would probably have been too old to use it properly. The rapier, mentioned throughout the play, was the latest fashion, at least among the wealthy. It was a single-handed, sharply pointed sword. Its long blade, its lightness and a special hilt, which protected the hand, made it the perfect thrusting weapon. It was often used in duels.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What begins the brawl in this scene?
- 2 Sampson and Gregory seem very similar. Describe their personalities.
- 3 How do Benvolio and Tybalt's characters contrast?
- 4 What do you think the Prince means when he says that recent brawls have been bred of an 'airy word'?
- 5 What does the Prince say the consequences will be for anyone who begins a brawl in the future?



EXTEND

- 1 How do Lady Capulet and Lady Montague differ from their husbands in their attitude towards the brawl?
- 2 What do we learn about the depth and nature of the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets from this opening scene?
- 3 At the start of any play, it is important that the playwright captures the audience's attention. What elements do you think the opening scene includes that successfully capture the audience's interest?



DISCUSS

- 1 What do you think an equivalent to biting your thumb might be today?
- 2 What kinds of similar brawls do we see today? Do they have similar causes?

Baz Luhrmann: DVD Chapter 2 ('The Brawl')



PRESS PLAY

View Baz Luhrmann's film version (1996) from the Prologue to halfway through Act I Scene I, where the brawl ends.

Luhrmann uses a number of **techniques** to portray the conflict between the Montagues and the Capulets. One is the use of setting. Note the two large buildings belonging to Capulet and Montague on either side of the main street. This emphasises their opposition to each other and also shows that the 'two households' are rich and powerful or 'both alike in dignity'.

Also note how Luhrmann, before the entry of Benvolio and Tybalt, gives some of the Capulets' lines to the Montagues, and some of the Montagues' lines to the Capulets.

- 1 Explore how Luhrmann uses the following visual features in his film version of this scene to show the differences between the Montagues and Capulets:
 - a costume
 - b props
 - c symbols or visual motifs.
- 2 Discuss how Luhrmann uses camera work and the soundtrack to build tension and create humour in the opening scene.

Introducing puns

A pun is a play on words. It may play on the fact that a word has a double meaning ('lie' as in lying down or 'lie' as in not telling the truth), or it may play on the fact that two words sound similar, such as 'made' and 'marred' (meaning ruined), which is a pun that Capulet uses in Scene 2.

In this scene, there is some quite rude and sometimes violent punning. Sampson, for example, jokes about cutting off his enemies' 'heads' or taking their virginity (their 'maidenheads'). Another example of vulgar punning relates to Sampson's 'naked weapon' being out and being told to draw his 'tool'.

Q See if you can explain the punning on the word 'back' in the quote below (lines 27–28 from Act I Scene 1):

SAMPSON ... Quarrel, I will back thee.
GREGORY How? Turn thy back and run?

- Q What does Sampson mean when he first uses the word 'back'?
- Q What does Gregory mean when he uses the word 'back'?

Look out for some more puns, which Shakespeare likes to use, especially in Act I Scene 4.

Act 1 Scene 1 (Part 2)

CHARACTERS

Romeo
Benvolio
Lord Montague
Lady Montague

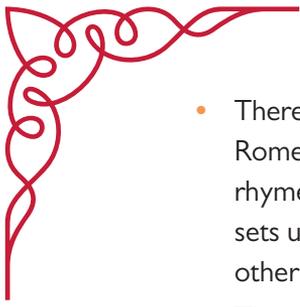


IN A NUTSHELL

After the brawl, Montague and Lady Montague question Benvolio, firstly about the brawl, and then about their son, Romeo. They are concerned by his moody and anti-social behaviour. Benvolio approaches Romeo, who tells him that he is depressed because the girl he is in love with does not love him. Benvolio tries to persuade Romeo to forget about her.

Before you read

- Romeo and his friends enjoy playing around with the sounds and meanings of words. For them, it is almost a game at which they compete. Romeo's use of language is often showy or over the top, and we need to remember that someone in love (or who *thinks* they are in love) can say stupid things.



- There are many short lines and quick exchanges between Benvolio and Romeo in this scene, and many of the lines in the conversation rhyme. This rhyme gives the conversation a momentum: that is, the first part of the rhyme sets up an expectation, and the thought almost seems incomplete until the other character completes the rhyming couplet.
- The scene introduces two characters from classical mythology. Cupid, the Roman god of love, is often represented as a winged boy, carrying a bow and arrow. Anyone pierced with an arrow from Cupid's bow would fall in love. Diana (also known as Artemis in ancient Greece) was the goddess of hunting and chastity (sexual purity). She was very attractive and cunning. In this scene, Romeo describes the woman who is resisting him as having 'Dian's wit' (she is clever at avoiding his advances).

V

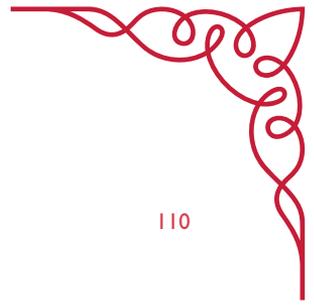
- Abroach:** Astir; in motion
- Fray:** Fight
- Augmenting:** Adding to
- Portentous:** Serious; a sign that something bad is going to happen
- Humour:** Mood or, in this case, behaviour
- Happy:** Lucky

Verona. A public place.

MONTAGUE	Who set this ancient quarrel new abroach? Speak, nephew: were you by when it began?	90
BENVOLIO	Here were the servants of your adversary, 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, Who nothing hurt withal hissed him in scorn. 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.	95
L. MONTAGUE	O, where is Romeo? Saw you him today? Right glad I am he was not at this fray.	100
BENVOLIO	Madam, an hour before the worshipped sun Peered forth the golden window of the east, A troubled mind drew me from company,	105



- 92 **The servants of your adversary:** The Capulets (who are Montague's enemies).
- 98 **Withal:** Nevertheless; yet.



Where, underneath the grove of sycamore
 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 110
 And stole into the covert of the wood.
 I, measuring his affections by my own,
 Which then most sought where most might not be found,
 Being one too many by my weary self,
 Pursued my humour, not pursuing his, 115
 And gladly shunned who gladly fled from me.
 MONTAGUE Many a morning hath he there been seen,
 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 120
 Should in the furthest east begin to draw
 The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
 Away from the light steals home my heavy son,
 And private in his chamber pens himself,
 Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out, 125
 And makes himself an artificial night.
 Black and portentous must this humour prove,
 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. 130
 BENVOLIO Have you importuned him by any means?
 MONTAGUE Both by myself and many other friends.
 But he, his own affections' counsellor,
 Is to himself (I will not say how true);
 But to himself so secret and so close, 135
 So far from sounding and discovery,



107 **The grove of sycamore:** A circle of sycamore trees. The sycamore is associated with love-sickness; probably a pun: sickamour.

111 **Stole into the covert of the wood:** Hid in the forest ('covert' = cover).

112–16 **I, measuring his affections ... gladly fled from me:** Benvolio suggests that he kept his distance because neither he nor Romeo wanted company.

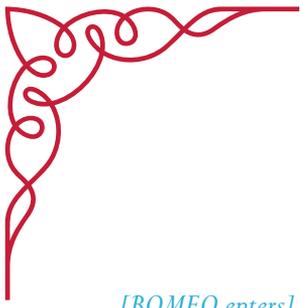
120–26 **But all so soon as ... an artificial night:** After noting that Romeo has been behaving as if he is depressed, Montague says that his son has been avoiding daylight and, when the sun rises, Romeo returns home and shuts himself away in his dark room ('Aurora' = the goddess of the dawn in Roman mythology).

127–28 **Black and portentous ... cause remove:** Romeo is in a mood so dark and bitter that it is a bad sign for the future (it is 'portentous'). Benvolio is asked to find out why Romeo is so upset, in order that his depression might be cured.

131 **Importuned:** Continually questioned.

133 **His own affections' counsellor:** Romeo keeps his problems to himself, taking no-one's advice.

136 **Far from sounding and discovery:** Far from being understood.



As is the bud bit with an envious worm,
 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, 140
 We would as willingly give cure as know.

[ROMEO enters]

BENVOLIO See, where he comes. So please you, step aside;
 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. 145

[MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE exit]

BENVOLIO Good morrow, cousin.
 ROMEO Is the day so young?
 BENVOLIO But new struck nine.
 ROMEO Ay me! Sad hours seem long.
 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. 150
 BENVOLIO In love?
 ROMEO Out –
 BENVOLIO Of love?
 ROMEO Out of her favour, where I am in love.
 BENVOLIO Alas, that love, so gentle in his view, 155
 Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!
 ROMEO Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,
 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. 160
 Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.
 Why, then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
 O anything, of nothing first create!
 O heavy lightness! Serious vanity!
 Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms! 165



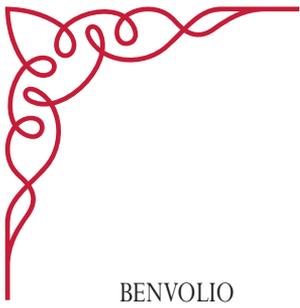
137–39 As is the bud ... his beauty to the sun: Montague compares his young son's situation to a bud that will die before it grows to maturity, as it is under attack from a worm.

144–45 I would thou wert ... true shrift: I hope you're lucky ('happy') enough to hear a true confession ('shrift').

147 Ay me: An exclamation of weariness or anguish.

155–58 Alas, that love ... to his will: Benvolio observes that it is sad that love, which is meant to be so gentle, seems so cruel in reality ('in proof'). In reply, Romeo is frustrated that he can't see Cupid's will, that he can't find love.

162–68 Why then, O brawling love ... no love in this: A series of oxymorons (see page 33), which give insight into Romeo's state of mind.



She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
 Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
 Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold. 200
 O, she is rich in beauty, only poor,
 That when she dies, with beauty dies her store.
 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 205
 Cuts beauty off from all posterity.
 She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,
 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. 210
 BENVOLIO Be ruled by me: forget to think of her.
 ROMEO O, teach me how I should forget to think.
 BENVOLIO By giving liberty unto thine eyes;
 Examine other beauties.
 ROMEO 'Tis the way
 To call hers exquisite, in question more. 215
 These happy masks that kiss fair ladies' brows
 Being black put us in mind they hide the fair;
 He that is stricken blind cannot forget
 The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.
 Show me a mistress that is passing fair, 220
 What doth her beauty serve, but as a note
 Where I may read who passed that passing fair?
 Farewell, thou canst not teach me to forget.
 BENVOLIO I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

[Both exit]



198–204 She will not stay ... makes huge waste: The woman of whom Romeo talks will not be seduced by anyone, not even someone offering the amount of gold that could corrupt a saint. Romeo argues that this beauty is wasted if she will not share it.

205–06 For beauty starved ... from all posterity: Romeo asserts that if the woman he loves practises chastity, her beauty will not live on in children ('posterity' = future generations). Shakespeare presents a similar idea in some of the sonnets he wrote.

209 Foresworn to love: Sworn never to fall in love.

211 Be ruled by me: Take my advice.

214–15 'Tis the way ... in question more: Romeo thinks that examining other beauties will cause him to find his love more exquisite.

216–17 These happy masks ... hide the fair: These lucky masks that hide women's features remind us of their beauty.

220 Passing fair: Beyond fair; extremely beautiful.

224 I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt: I'll convince you of my idea or die trying.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What do we learn about Romeo’s recent behaviour from the conversation between Benvolio and Romeo’s parents?
- 2 How has the girl Romeo is in love with responded to him?
- 3 What does Benvolio tell Romeo he should do about his situation?
- 4 To what extent are the types of words below evident in Romeo’s use of language? Create a table like the following for your notes.

Types of words	Strongly evident	Evident	Not evident
Foul or vulgar			
Playful			
Concise (to the point)			
Poetic			
Melodramatic (over the top)			



EXTEND

- 1 This scene contains numerous references to ‘eyes’ and ‘eyesight’, often mentioned in relation to love. What insight might this give us into Romeo’s view of love?
- 2 In lines 191–97, Romeo and Benvolio present the idea of Cupid firing arrows of love. What might they be suggesting about the nature of love? And what might we expect to occur in the following scenes?

Introducing antithesis

One aspect of *Romeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare’s creation of a series of contrasts that repeat themselves throughout the play. Another term for contrast is **antithesis** (anti = opposite; thesis = idea). Perhaps by now you have noticed the repeated oppositions of life/death, love/hate, male/female, peace/enmity, old/young and light/dark.

Q Choose two of the opposing ideas (antitheses) mentioned above and write a sentence for each, describing how they have been demonstrated throughout the play so far.

One specific type of antithesis that is used in the previous scene is **oxymoron**. An oxymoron is created when a writer places contradictory words next to each other to achieve a powerful effect. Examples include ‘bitter-sweet’ and ‘clever idiot’. Two that Romeo uses in the speech below are ‘cold fire’ and ‘sick health’.



- 
- Q Take a close look at the following excerpt from Romeo's speech. List three examples of oxymoron in this speech, other than 'cold fire' and 'sick health'.

Why, then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
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!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.

165

- Q Why do you think Romeo uses so many oxymorons in such a short space of time? What might Shakespeare be showing us about Romeo's emotional state?

Look for the use of antithesis (including oxymoron) throughout the remainder of *Romeo and Juliet*, noting how these opposing ideas add to the play's drama and conflict.

Act 1 Scene 2

CHARACTERS

Capulet
Romeo
Benvolio
Servant
Paris
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

Paris asks Capulet for permission to marry his daughter, Juliet. Capulet insists that she is still too young, but invites Paris to a party at his house that night. He then gives a guest list to one of his servants, who unfortunately can't read. The servant bumps into Romeo and Benvolio, who are still discussing Romeo's sadness. Romeo reads out the list, which includes Rosaline and his best friend, Mercutio. The servant invites Benvolio and Romeo to the party and eventually Benvolio persuades Romeo to attend, claiming that he will surely find someone there more beautiful than Rosaline.

Before you read

- If you read the role of Paris, remember that, although you are an important person (a Count), you are talking to a man whose daughter you wish to marry, so be especially polite.
- 'Sirrah' is a form of address similar to 'Sir', but often used to address people of lower social rank or position (e.g. a servant).

V

Suit:	Offer of marriage
Ere:	Before
Marred:	Ruined or made bad
Woo:	Try to win the love of someone
Lusty:	Energetic
Learnèd:	Knowledgeable

A street.

[CAPULET, PARIS and a SERVANT enter]

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.	
PARIS	Of honourable reckoning are you both; And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.	5
	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. Let two more summers wither in their pride Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.	10
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; She is the hopeful lady of my earth.	15
	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. 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 Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light.	20
	Such comfort as do lusty young men feel	25

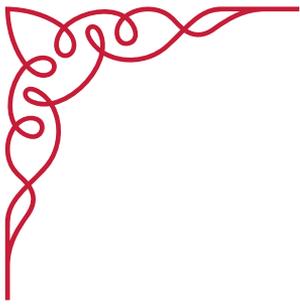
4 **Reckoning:** Reputation.

18–19 **An she agree ... fair according voice:** If Juliet chooses someone worthy, I will give permission for her to marry.

20 **Old accustomed feast:** A feast conducted according to custom; a traditional feast.

25 **Earth-treading stars:** Beautiful, perhaps even angelic women. Women so beautiful that they are like fallen stars or angels who have fallen to earth.





When well-apparelled April on the heel
 Of limping winter treads; even such delight
 Among fresh female buds shall you this night
 Inherit at my house. Hear all, all see, 30
 And like her most whose merit most shall be,
 Which on more view, of many, mine being one,
 May stand in number, though in reckoning none.
 Come, go with me.

[CAPULET speaks to his SERVANT, and gives him a piece of paper]

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

[CAPULET and PARIS exit]

SERVANT Find them out whose names are written here? It is written that
 the shoemaker should meddle with his yard, and the tailor with
 his last, the fisher with his pencil, and the painter with his nets; 40
 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 learnèd: in good time.

[BENVOLIO and ROMEO enter]

BENVOLIO Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning,
 One pain is lessened by another's anguish; 45
 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.

ROMEO Your plaintain leaf is excellent for that. 50

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,
 Whipped and tormented and – good den, good fellow. 55

SERVANT God gi' good den. I pray, sir, can you read?

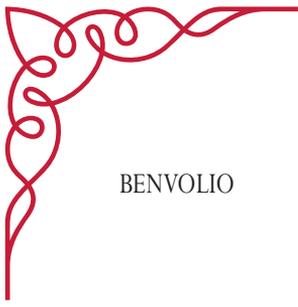


27–28 Well-apparelled April ... limping winter treads: Capulet uses personification to present April as well-dressed and quick on the heels of limping winter. April is a Spring month in England.

44–49 Tut, man, one fire ... the old will die: Benvolio still argues that Romeo can get over Rosaline by falling in love with other women.

50–51 Your plaintain leaf ... your broken shin: Plaintain leaf was used to heal cuts and grazes. It is possible that, in the original performance of the play, the actor playing Romeo would have kicked Benvolio when he delivered the phrase 'for your broken shin'.

55–56 Good den ... God gi' good den: Good evening; God give you a good evening.



BENVOLIO One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sun
 Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun. 95
 Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by,
 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 splendour of mine own.

[ALL exit]



101–02 I'll go along ... mine own: Romeo does not believe he will find anyone more beautiful than Rosaline, but he decides to go along to the party to enjoy himself and show off his own good looks.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What does Paris ask of Capulet?
- 2 What is Capulet's reply?
- 3 Why does Benvolio want Romeo to go to the party?
- 4 Benvolio tells Romeo to compare Rosaline's face to others with an 'unattainted' eye. What do you think he might mean by this?



EXTEND

- 1 How does Shakespeare create a contrast between the characters of Romeo and Capulet's Servant by the language each character uses?
- 2 Throughout this scene, Romeo and Benvolio continue to link their view of love with words such as 'eyes' and 'eyesight'. How does the repetition of these concepts add to your understanding of their characters?

Introducing metaphors

If you have ever called someone hot, a pig, a gun, a dog or even a legend, then you have used a **metaphor**. A metaphor is not literally true but it makes a powerful comparison that is true in a deeper sense. If, for example, you call your brother a *pig*, you know that he is not literally a pig, but you might be communicating something about his manners or perhaps how much he eats. If you describe a shot on the soccer pitch as a *rocket*, you know it's not literally a rocket, but you are saying something about the shot's speed and power. Again, you might describe someone attractive as *hot*. Clearly, you are not discussing their temperature!

- Q There are numerous metaphors that are used to describe women in Act I Scene 2. Find which character uses each phrase and label the description as complimentary or uncomplimentary.

Phrase	Character who uses this phrase	Complimentary or not?
Fresh female buds		
Earth-treading stars		
Swan		
Crow		

- Q Can you see any similarities between the way women are described in Shakespeare's time and how they are described today? Have things changed?



Go, sirrah, trudge about through fair Verona ...

Servants

It was very common to keep servants in Elizabethan times. Those who ran a successful business often employed some of their poorer relatives. Larger households had great numbers of servants to maintain their gardens, to cook, to clean, to do their shopping and to entertain them. We have already met some of these sorts of servants in the opening scenes of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Children born to wealthy parents were often raised by a wet-nurse, who would perform all the duties of a mother, including breastfeeding. As the children grew, they were most likely educated by a tutor and cared for by a number of servants. A young man would have his own page (or valet), as do Romeo and Paris. This person would act as a sort of personal assistant. A young woman would be more likely to have a waiting gentlewoman or maid.

In this next scene we meet Juliet's Nurse. She has raised Juliet since she was a baby and has spent much more time with her than her mother, Lady Capulet. You will notice throughout the play that Juliet is closer to her Nurse than her mother, and that Lady Capulet, like many wealthy parents of the time, does not seem to know her daughter very well.





Act 1 Scene 3

CHARACTERS

Nurse
Lady Capulet
Juliet
Servant



IN A NUTSHELL

Lady Capulet informs Juliet that Paris wishes to marry her. In doing so, she attempts to persuade Juliet that marriage is desirable and looks for the Nurse's support.

Before you read

- Note the special relationship between Juliet and her Nurse. Read more about servants and wet-nurses during Elizabethan times in the History Box on the previous page.
- The Nurse is widely considered to be one of Shakespeare's most fully developed early characters. She likes to talk but tends to stray from the subject and often repeats herself.
- Look out for the use of dashes (–) in this scene. Often they indicate a change in who is being addressed, e.g. when the Nurse switches from addressing Lady Capulet to addressing Juliet: 'God forbid! Where's this girl? – What, Juliet!' Frequently in this scene the dash indicates that the Nurse strays from the point.



Disposition:	Nature; temperament or feeling
Valiant:	Noble or heroic
Lamas-tide:	A holy day in August
Dug:	Breast
Holidam:	Holiness
Beseech:	Request

A room in Capulet's house.

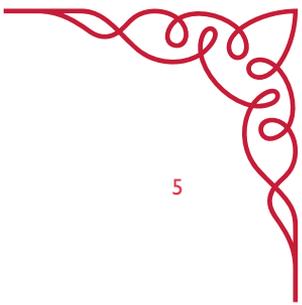
[LADY CAPULET and NURSE enter]

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!

[JULIET enters]

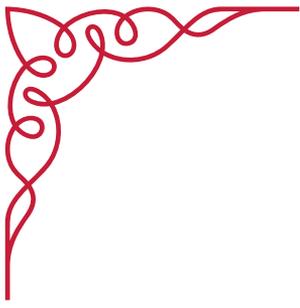


3 **I bade her come:** I called for her to come.



JULIET How now! Who calls?
 NURSE Your mother.
 JULIET Madam, I am here. 5
 What is your will?
 LADY CAPULET This is the matter – Nurse, give leave awhile:
 We must talk in secret – Nurse, come back again;
 I have remembered me, thou's hear our counsel.
 Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age. 10
 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 –
 She is not fourteen. How long is it now
 To Lammas Tide?
 LADY CAPULET A fortnight and odd days. 15
 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! –
 Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God:
 She was too good for me; but, as I said, 20
 On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen;
 That shall she, marry; I remember it well.
 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;
 And she was weaned – I never shall forget it –
 Of all the days of the year, upon that day: 25
 For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
 Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall;
 My lord and you were then at Mantua –
 Nay, I do bear a brain – but, as I said,
 When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple 30
 Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
 To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug!
 'Shake', quoth the dove-house! 'Twas no need, I trow,
 To bid me trudge.

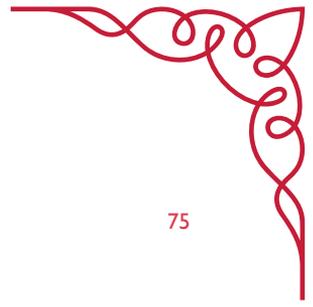
- 
-
- 9 **Thou's hear:** You shall hear.
 13 **To my teen:** To my sorrow or I'm sorry to say.
 18–19 **Susan and she ... were of an age:** The Nurse had a daughter of the same age as Juliet, but she died.
 24 **Weaned:** Taken off breast milk (began consuming solids).
 30–32 **When it did taste ... with the dug:** The Nurse recalls how she used a bitter herbal concoction (wormwood) on her breast to get Juliet off breast milk. She remembers how Juliet would become 'tetchy' (irritable) and fight with her breast. This is a good example of how the Nurse tends to become distracted from the point she is discussing.
 33–34 **'Shake', quoth ... bid me trudge:** This refers back to the earthquake. When the shed that housed the doves shook, the Nurse knew it was time to flee ('I trow' = I am sure).



And since that time it is eleven years, 35
 For then she could stand high-lone; nay, by the rood,
 She could have run and waddled all about;
 For even the day before, she broke her brow;
 And then my husband – God be with his soul!
 A’ was a merry man – took up the child: 40
 ‘Yea’, quoth he, ‘dost thou fall upon thy face?
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit;
 Wilt thou not, Jule?’ and, by my holidam,
 The pretty wretch left crying and said, ‘Ay’.
 To see, now, how a jest shall come about! 45
 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’ –
 LADY CAPULET Enough of this; I pray thee, hold thy peace.
 NURSE Yes, madam: yet I cannot choose but laugh, 50
 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 cockerel’s stone;
 A perilous knock; and it cried bitterly:
 ‘Yea’, quoth my husband, ‘fall’st upon thy face?’ 55
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age;
 Wilt thou not, Jule?’ It stinted and said, ‘Ay’.
 JULIET And stint thou too, I pray thee, Nurse, say I.
 NURSE Peace, I have done. God mark thee to His grace!
 Thou wast the prettiest babe that e’er I nursed. 60
 An I might live to see thee married once,
 I have my wish –
 LADY CAPULET Marry, that ‘marry’ is the very theme
 I came to talk of – Tell me, daughter Juliet,
 How stands your disposition to be married? 65
 JULIET It is an honour that I dream not of.
 NURSE An honour! Were not I thine only nurse,
 I would say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.
 LADY CAPULET Well, think of marriage now; younger than you,
 Here in Verona, ladies of esteem, 70
 Are made already mothers. By my count,



- 36 **By the rood:** By the cross (a mild oath referring to the cross on which Jesus was crucified).
 38–44 **For even the day ... and said ‘Ay’:** When Juliet began walking she fell forward, and the Nurse’s husband (no longer alive) joked that it would not be long until Juliet was falling backward. He was being bawdy or sexually suggestive, but Juliet, not understanding his meaning, responded ‘ay’, roughly equivalent to ‘yes’.
 48 **Stinted:** Stopped.
 65 **How stands your disposition to be married?** How would you feel about getting married?



I was your mother much upon these years
That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

NURSE A man, young lady! Lady, such a man 75
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.

LADY CAPULET What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast: 80
Read o’er the volume of young Paris’ face,
And find delight writ there with beauty’s pen;
Examine every married lineament,
And see how one another lends content;
And what obscured in this fair volume lies 85
Find written in the margin of his eyes.
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover.
The fish lives in the sea, and ‘tis much pride
For fair without the fair within to hide. 90
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,
By having him, making yourself no less.

NURSE No less! Nay, bigger: women grow by men. 95
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
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

[SERVANT enters]

SERVANT Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you called, my 100
young lady asked for, the Nurse cursed in the pantry, and everything
in extremity. I must hence to wait; I beseech you, follow straight.



- 76 **A man of wax:** A mould (for making models) was often made out of wax in Shakespeare’s time, thus the Nurse is suggesting that Paris is a perfect man, a model for others to copy.
- 81–94 **Read o’er the volume ... making yourself no less:** A lengthy conceit (extended metaphor) where Lady Capulet compares Paris to a book (where Juliet might read a love story). Lady Capulet ends her speech by pointing out that Juliet will ‘grow’ in status by marrying Paris and she perhaps hints that Juliet will fall pregnant. This is the meaning Juliet’s Nurse picks up on.
- 83 **Every married lineament:** Each different line (in a book).
- 97–99 **I’ll look to like ... make it fly:** Looking at him will not necessarily make me like him. If I do like him, I’ll wait for your permission to marry (‘endart’ = bury like an arrow).
- 101–02 **Everything in extremity:** Everything in the house is in a state of chaos and confusion, as they are organising the masked ball.



LADY CAPULET We follow thee –

[SERVANT exits]

NURSE Juliet, the County stays.
Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

[All exit]



103 **The County stays:** The Count (Paris) is waiting.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Copy these sentences into your workbook and fill in the blanks.
 - a Juliet's mother is Lady _____.
 - b Juliet is almost _____ years old.
 - c Lady Capulet and Juliet's Nurse want Juliet to marry _____.
- 2 Using evidence from this scene, approximately how old do you think Juliet's mother might be?
- 3 How do Lady Capulet and the Nurse try to persuade Juliet to marry? What reasons do they give?
- 4 Do you think Juliet is enthusiastic about the planned marriage? Use evidence from the text.



EXTEND

- 1 What do you think the Nurse means when she jokes, in lines 2–3, 'At twelve year old, / I bade her come'? (Keep in mind Juliet's age.)
- 2 Here are some phrases that Juliet's mother (Lady Capulet) and her Nurse use when talking to Juliet. In your workbook, create and complete a table like the one below.

	Lady Capulet	Nurse
Words and phrases used when talking to Juliet	'This is the matter ...' 'Tell me, daughter Juliet ...' 'Speak briefly: can you like of Paris' love?' 'Juliet, the County stays.'	'What, Lamb! What Juliet!' 'Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed ...' 'A man, young lady ...' 'Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.'
Describe the language she uses when talking to Juliet.		
What is her attitude towards Juliet?		
Describe her relationship with Juliet.		

- 3 What features of the Nurse's dialogue/language does Shakespeare use to construct her as a likable character?



- 1 How would you feel about your parents having such an influence on whom you married?
- 2 Consider the following lines (97–99) from this scene.

JULIET I'll look to like, if looking liking move:
 But no more deep will I endart mine eye
 Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Now, try delivering the lines in as many interesting ways as possible and comment on which you like best. They could be delivered as an obedient Elizabethan daughter or as a modern-day teenager in a bad mood.

Act 1 Scene 4

CHARACTERS

Mercutio
Romeo
Benvolio

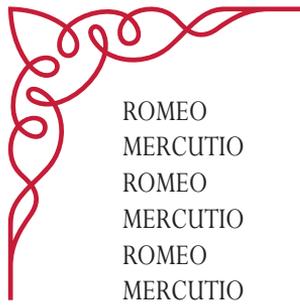


IN A NUTSHELL

One of Romeo's friends, Mercutio, persuades a reluctant Romeo to accompany a group of them to a masked ball at the Capulet house. He debates with Romeo on the nature of love and dreams. At the end of the scene, Romeo tells his friends that he has a bad feeling about what might happen that night.

Before you read

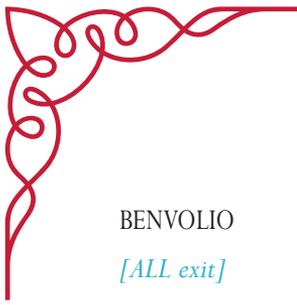
- Try to visualise a big group heading for a party that involves costumes and masks ('visors'). Some of the group are carrying torches to see the way. There is a feeling of excitement and everyone is showing off.
- This scene introduces Mercutio, the biggest show-off in the play. He loves to joke around with words and their meanings, and he enjoys teasing his good friend, Romeo. While Romeo's lines in this scene should be delivered with a depressed weariness, Mercutio's delivery should be much quicker and more playful.
- The long speech in which Mercutio speaks about Queen Mab (lines 53–95) may seem difficult at first. Remember that he is describing a fictional character and what she does. You can still enjoy the speech without understanding every word and image.



ROMEO I dreamed a dream tonight.
 MERCUTIO And so did I. 50
 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
 In shape no bigger than an agate-stone 55
 On the fore-finger of an alderman,
 Drawn with a team of little atomies
 Over men's noses as they lie asleep.
 Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
 Her cover of the wings of grasshoppers, 60
 Her traces of the smallest spider web,
 Her collars of the moonshine's watery beams;
 Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film;
 Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat,
 Not half so big as a round little worm 65
 Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid;
 Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut
 Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
 Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
 And in this state she gallops night by night 70
 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,
 Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues, 75
 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;



-
- 54 **Midwife:** A woman who assists with childbirth.
 - 55 **Agate:** A precious stone.
 - 56 **Alderman:** Local councilman. This was a position held by Shakespeare's father.
 - 57 **Atomies:** Little creatures.
 - 60 **Cover:** Hood.
 - 61 **Traces:** Reins or harness.
 - 65–66 **Not half so big ... finger of a maid:** Lazy maids were said to have maggots under their fingers. This would not have been taken seriously by Shakespeare's original audience.
 - 69 **Time out o' mind:** A longer time ago than anyone can remember.
 - 72 **Courtier:** Someone who attends a royal court.
 - 72 **Curtsey:** A respectful bow. A courtier would do this regularly in the presence of royalty.
 - 76 **Sweetmeats:** Confectionary which (in the days before toothpaste) was used to sweeten breath but which also hastened the rotting of teeth.
 - 78 **Smelling out a suit:** Finding a way to get into favour.



By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But He that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen.
Strike, drum.

BENVOLIO

[*ALL exit*]



- 112–13 He that hath the steerage of my course, / Direct my sail:** Romeo feels that his life is beyond his own control and is happy to leave things to a higher power such as God, fate or destiny.
- 113 Lusty:** Full of sexual energy; or strong and vigorous, which could be a contrast to the 'death' Romeo is worried about.



QUESTIONS

- 1 The group is on its way to a masked ball. Where is it being held?
- 2 Why doesn't Romeo want to go to the party?
- 3 Mercutio's advice to Romeo is: 'If love be rough with you, be rough with love' (line 27). How does his attitude towards love seem to differ from Romeo's?
- 4 Read Mercutio's speech that begins, 'O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you' (lines 53–95) and answer the following questions.
 - a Describe the size of Queen Mab.
 - b Through what does she gallop?
 - c Of what does she make people dream?



EXTEND

- 1 What sort of character is Mercutio, based on your first impression? What features of Mercutio's language has Shakespeare used to create this impression?
- 2 Why do you think Mercutio ends a speech on love and dreams by discussing childbirth? What point might he be making?
- 3 Romeo predicts 'some consequence yet hanging in the stars' (line 107).
 - a What do you think Romeo means by this?
 - b What lines or phrases from the Prologue (page 16) also talk about fate or the stars?
 - c What sort of mood or atmosphere is Shakespeare intending to create through Romeo's prediction?



DISCUSS

If you were to direct this scene on stage, how would you present the character of Mercutio? What theatrical devices (e.g. costume, lighting, music, movement, positioning, actions) would you use to do so?



Act 1 Scene 5

CHARACTERS

Capulet
Romeo
Juliet
Tybalt
Nurse
1ST, 2ND, 3RD and 4TH Servants
Capulet's Cousin
Benvolio
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

At the Capulets' masked ball, Romeo meets Juliet and they fall in love at first sight. Tybalt bitterly complains to Capulet about Romeo (a Montague) and his intrusion, but Capulet orders him not to take revenge. The scene ends with first Romeo and then Juliet discovering that they are from rival families.

Before you read

- Imagine a party scene with people in different places around the stage. Remember, only Mercutio has been invited to this party; Romeo and Benvolio are entering the house of their enemy. They are, of course, wearing masks but they are still taking an enormous risk.
- Capulet prides himself on being a welcoming and generous host. He attempts to tell jokes and make everyone feel welcome while, at the same time, giving instructions to his servants. Look out for the dashes (–), which indicate a change in whom he is addressing.
- Watch for Romeo and Juliet's **extended metaphor** (or conceit), in which they compare pilgrims to lovers. In pairs, practise lines 91–108, spoken when Romeo and Juliet first meet and instantly fall in love. Focus on the language, which is rich in imagery of religious pilgrims, emphasising the purity and innocence of their love.



Yonder / yon:	Over there
Kin / kinsman:	Relative(s)
Solemnity:	An important occasion that people celebrate; in this case, a masked ball
Wherefore:	Why
Prodigious:	Amazing, but also means monstrous or appalling

A hall in the Capulet house.

[Musicians make preparations; SERVANTS with napkins enter]

1ST SERVANT Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift a trencher!
He scrape a trencher!

2ND SERVANT When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and
they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

1ST SERVANT 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 – Antony, and
Potpan! 5

3RD SERVANT Ay, boy, ready.

1ST SERVANT You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought for, in the
great chamber. 10

4TH SERVANT We cannot be here and there too. Cheerly, boys; be brisk awhile,
and the longer liver take all.

*[3RD and 4TH SERVANTS exit; CAPULET enters, with JULIET and others of his house, meeting the
Guests and Maskers]*

CAPULET Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes
Unplagued with corns will walk a bout with you – 15

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

That I have worn a visor and could tell 20

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]

More light, you knaves; and turn the tables up, 25

And quench the fire: the room is grown too hot –

1–2 **Where's Potpan ... scrape a trencher:** This character, Potpan, doesn't appear in the play and the servant's words imply that he is never present when there is work to be done ('trencher' = a wooden plate).

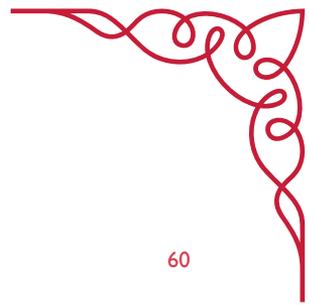
5 **Joint-stools:** Wooden stools.

6 **Marchpane:** Marzipan.

14–18 **Ladies that have ... am I come near ye now:** Capulet is encouraging his guests not to be shy, but to take to the dance floor. He jokes that the only women who will not have a dance (or 'walk a bout') are those whose feet are blemished by 'corns'.

20 **Visor:** Mask.

25 **Knaves:** Servants or scoundrels (if Capulet means this as 'scoundrels', he intends it to be light-hearted).



Now, by the stock and honour 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,
A villain that is hither come in spite,
To scorn at our solemnity this night. 60

CAPULET Young Romeo is it?
TYBALT 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.
CAPULET Content thee, gentle coz; let him alone.
He bears him like a portly gentleman;
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him 65
To be a virtuous and well-governed youth:
I would not for the wealth of all the town
Here in my house do him disparagement;
Therefore be patient, take no note of him.
It is my will, the which if thou respect, 70
Show a fair presence and put off these frowns,
An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

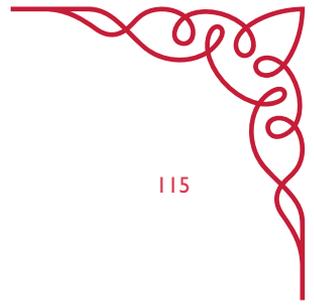
TYBALT It fits, when such a villain is a guest.
I'll not endure him.

CAPULET He shall be endured.
What, goodman boy! I say, he shall. Go to! 75
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!

TYBALT Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.
CAPULET Go to, go to! 80
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.
Be quiet, or – More light, more light! – For shame! 85
I'll make you quiet, what – Cheerly, my hearts!



- 64 **He bears him like a portly gentleman:** He is behaving like an honourable gentleman ('portly' = well-mannered).
- 68 **Do him disparagement:** Treat him disrespectfully, as if he is of lower class or value.
- 75 **Goodman boy:** Childish, immature and cheeky little boy; this suggests being ill-bred.
- 75 **Go to:** An expression of impatience, similar to 'that's enough'.
- 79 **Set cock-a-hoop:** Start a riot; create chaos.
- 81 **Saucy:** Insolent.



I tell you, he that can lay hold of her
Shall have the chinks.

ROMEO Is she a Capulet? 115

O dear account! My life is my foe's debt.

BENVOLIO Away, begone; the sport is at the best.

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

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

Is it e'en so? Why, then, I thank you all;
I thank you, honest gentlemen; good night –
More torches here! – Come on then, let's to bed –
Ah, sirrah, by my fay, it waxes late:
I'll to my rest. 125

[All exit; JULIET returns with her 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 Petrucio.

JULIET What's he that follows there, that would not dance? 130

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,
The only son of your great enemy. 135

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.

NURSE What's this? What's this?

JULIET A rhyme I learned even now 140

Of one I danced withal.

[Someone calls 'Juliet' from within]

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

[All exit]



114–15 **He that can lay ... have the chinks:** The man who marries her will have plenty of money (her father is rich). 'Chink' refers to the sound of coins jangling.

116 **My life is my foe's debt:** My enemy has given me reason to live.

117 **The sport is at the best:** We have had enough fun for tonight.

120 **We have a trifling foolish banquet towards:** Capulet dismisses the supper that is about to be served as not worth the trouble.

124 **By my fay, it waxes late:** By my faith, it grows late.



QUESTIONS

- 1 When Romeo first sees Juliet he is astounded by her beauty. In line 42 he exclaims, 'O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!' What do you think he means by this?
- 2 What is Tybalt's attitude towards Romeo being at the party?
- 3 Capulet calls Tybalt a 'prince'. Without looking this word up, write down what you think it means and why you think this.
- 4 What narrative complication (difficulty) is introduced at the end of this scene? What are some possible ways that Romeo and Juliet might be able to resolve or overcome this complication?



EXTEND

- 1 What aspects of the opening section of this scene (lines 1–26) work together to create an atmosphere of hurried chaos?
- 2 At the end of his first speech (lines 50–51), Romeo exclaims:

*Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.*

(Forswear: Deny or cancel a previous oath)

What do these lines reveal about his character? Keep in mind that in the previous scenes he was complaining about being in love with Rosaline.

- 3 How do the following devices reveal Tybalt's character to the reader in this scene?
 - a **Sound devices**, e.g. harsh-sounding words such as 'bitter gall'.
 - b **Alliteration of the 's' sound**, as in 'spite ... scorn ... solemnity'.
 - c **Tybalt's contrast to Capulet**. (Hint: showing positive aspects of Capulet helps us to see Tybalt's negative qualities more clearly.)
- 4 When Romeo meets Juliet face to face, he uses the **extended metaphor** or conceit of a religious pilgrim who is praying.
 - a Make a list of all the words and phrases that build this comparison.
 - b Why do you think Shakespeare uses religious imagery to describe Romeo and Juliet's love for each other?
- 5 Juliet's lines 136–39 include a number of **oxymorons** or **paradoxes**. How does Shakespeare use these to communicate her emotional state? (Remember: Romeo also spoke using oxymorons in Act I Scene I.)

Franco Zeffirelli and Baz Luhrmann: DVD ('The Party')



PRESS PLAY

View the Zeffirelli and Luhrmann interpretations of the party at which Romeo and Juliet meet. Consider the ways in which each director presents the **innocence** and the **passion** of the two lovers, and record your findings in a table like the one on the next page.



Similarities in the way they are presented	Differences in the way they are presented	Which film version do you prefer and why? (paragraph response)

A word about sonnets

There is something special about the way lines 91–104 are set out in this scene: they are structured as a sonnet (like the Prologue).

People have been writing sonnets in Italy since the thirteenth century and in England since the sixteenth century. Nearly every major poet in the English-speaking world has written at least a few of them. Their popularity seems to stem from the fact that they are like a little machine that is perfect for ordering thoughts and feelings. They are visually attractive, making an almost perfect square on the page. They sound great and they are easy to remember.

A sonnet is a 14-line poem with a clear, even strict, rhyming pattern. In English, the most popular type of sonnet has generally been the Elizabethan or Shakespearean sonnet, which has an ABAB CDCD EFEF GG rhyme scheme. The Elizabethan sonnet always ends on a rhyming couplet, which gives the sonnet a sound of confidence and surety.

In this scene, Shakespeare changes around the characters to whom he gives the lines: ABAB = Romeo; CDCD = Juliet; and GG is begun by Juliet and completed by Romeo. Overall, Romeo and Juliet are given an equal number of lines.

Q What might Shakespeare be intending to show about Romeo and Juliet by giving them an equal number of lines and by allowing Romeo to complete the rhyme begun by Juliet?

Sonnets are generally written in **iambic pentameter**, where every second syllable (or more exactly, every second beat) in a line is stressed or emphasised slightly more strongly. You can see this in the first line of Shakespeare's famous Sonnet 18, where the stresses have been marked in underlined, capital letters:

Shall I comPARE thee TO a SUMmer's DAY?

You should find the section on **Shakespeare's language** (pages 9–13) useful in explaining iambic pentameter; and for another look at sonnets, see **Shakespeare and the language of love** (pages 208–09).



Come, musicians, play ...

Elizabethan parties

In Act I Scene 5, Romeo and his friends attend a masked ball at the Capulets' house. By wearing masks, Romeo and his friends are able to sneak into the ball without being detected. Masks were popular at such parties because they allowed people to flirt and still be anonymous.

In Shakespeare's time, nobles looked to show off their wealth, and throwing parties was one way of doing this. In 1575 Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, threw a 19-day party in honour of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth Castle. It cost him 1000 pounds a day (which some say is equivalent to at least half a million dollars today). The celebrations included plays, Italian acrobats, bearbaiting, a water pageant on the lake and fireworks. In one of the entertainments a seven-metre-long mechanical dolphin rose out of the water with a singer on its back.

Kenilworth is only 17 kilometres from Stratford-upon-Avon and there is a good chance that Shakespeare, who would have been 11 at the time, saw some of the celebrations. Many of Shakespeare's plays show a fascination with royalty and perhaps this was where it all began.



Kenilworth Castle, gatehouse landscape

Act 2

Act 2 Prologue

CHARACTERS

Chorus



IN A NUTSHELL

Like the initial Prologue, this speech is spoken by a Chorus. It states that Romeo's affections for Rosaline have died because she now seems not as beautiful (or fair) to him when compared with Juliet. The speech suggests that the conflict between their families will make things difficult. Yet, despite the danger this will lead to, Romeo and Juliet pursue the relationship because of the strength of their love for each other.

Before you read

- This sonnet is usually omitted from modern performances of the play and some critics have speculated that it was not written by Shakespeare. It is not included in the oldest copy of the play (published in 1597) but it is included in the First Folio (published in 1623).

A word about personification

You may remember that a metaphor is not literally true but is a term that makes a powerful comparison that is true in a deeper sense: for example, 'my brother is a pig'.

Personification is a particular kind of metaphor where human feelings or qualities are given to unconscious or inanimate things. Poets often use personification. For example, Sylvia Plath's poem 'Mushrooms' gives mushrooms human features such as 'toes' and 'noses'. Jemal Sarah writes in her poem 'Motorbike Accident': 'the road // slapped up like a violent hand'. Here, Sarah gives the inanimate or lifeless road the human feature of a slapping hand to capture the shock and the shattering impact of coming off a motorbike at high speed.





Kevin Hart begins his poem 'Storm' with the following lines:



My garden falls quiet, falls into the darkest of moods,
Not wanting me around this afternoon.

Here Hart attributes the human quality of mood, more specifically bad temper, to a non-human garden. There is more than one example of personification in the following passage from 'Karma' by the English poet Craig Raine. See how many examples you can find:

... a naughty wind has blown
The dress of each tulip
over its head.

We often use personification in everyday speech; perhaps you have heard such phrases as 'a lonely road', 'a biting wind' or 'a welcoming fire' and never considered the metaphorical strangeness of these expressions. Personification occurs regularly in *Romeo and Juliet*, with Shakespeare attributing human characteristics to concepts such as death, love and fate. Personification is also employed in characters' presentation of objects such as the sun, moon and stars. Look out for examples of personification as you continue reading.

Prologue

[CHORUS enters]

CHORUS	Now old desire doth in his death-bed 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. Now Romeo is beloved and loves again,	5
	Alike bewitchèd 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 To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear;	10
	And she as much in love, her means much less	



-
- 2 **Gapes:** Yearns or longs for.
 - 4 **Matched:** Compared.
 - 6 **Alike bewitchèd:** They are both enchanted or besotted with one another.
 - 7 **Foe supposed:** Juliet is considered Romeo's enemy by everyone except Romeo.
 - 7 **Complain:** Plead for love.

To meet her new-belovèd anywhere.
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
Tempering extremities with extreme sweet.

[CHORUS exits]



14 **Tempering extremities:** Easing difficulties or dangers.



QUESTIONS

- 1 How does this sonnet employ **personification**? Give two examples. For a definition and examples of personification, see the box at the start of this Prologue.
- 2 Create the following table in your workbook and comment on whether you think the sonnet expresses a positive or negative attitude towards Romeo and Juliet's new love.

Positive words (about the couple's love)	Negative words (about the dangers of pursuing the relationship)



DISCUSS

If you were directing a modern stage production of *Romeo and Juliet*, would you include this sonnet? Why or why not?

Act 2 Scene 1

CHARACTERS

Mercutio
Benvolio
Romeo



IN A NUTSHELL

Romeo hides from Mercutio and Benvolio, who call after him. Mercutio mocks the overly romantic Romeo with playful insults and dirty jokes. When Romeo fails to return, they decide to go home.

Before you read

- Mercutio makes fun of Romeo for being melodramatic (overly emotional) and using poetic language. When you read these lines (especially 6–21), remember that Mercutio takes pleasure in insulting his good friend.

V

Humours: Moods
Invocation: Spell or conjuring
Befits: Suits

A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.

[ROMEO enters]

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

[ROMEO climbs the wall, and leaps down into CAPULET's orchard; BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO enter]

BENVOLIO Romeo! My cousin Romeo!
 MERCUTIO He is wise;
 And, on my life, hath stolen him home to bed.
 BENVOLIO He ran this way, and leaped this orchard wall. 5
 Call, good Mercutio.
 MERCUTIO Nay, I'll conjure too.
 Romeo! Humours! Madman! Passion! Lover!
 Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;
 Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied;
 Cry but 'Ay me!' Pronounce but 'love' and 'dove'; 10
 Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,
 One nick-name for her purblind son and heir,
 Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,
 When King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid!
 He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not; 15
 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
 And the demesnes that there adjacent lie, 20
 That in thy likeness thou appear to us!
 BENVOLIO And if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

2 **Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out:** Romeo addresses his body as 'dull earth' and instructs himself to go on and find his 'centre' (the heart that he has given to Juliet).

11–14 **Speak to my gossip ... loved the beggar-maid:** Mercutio presents Venus, the Roman goddess, as a close friend and challenges Romeo to speak one word to her or to her son, Cupid. In a story known to Shakespeare's audience, King Cophetua had sworn to live chastely but one day Cupid shot him at the exact moment he looked at a beautiful beggar woman. The King fell in love and ended up marrying her.

16 **The ape is dead:** Mercutio suggests that Romeo is a trained ape.

20 **Demesnes:** Areas or lands.



Introducing dramatic irony

Imagine your friend is making fun of someone and does not know (but you do) that your teacher is standing right behind them! How would you feel? Tense? Like diving across in slow motion and shouting, 'Nooooo!?' This is what **dramatic irony** is all about. Sometimes while viewing a play, we are placed in the position of knowing more than the characters on stage. For example, we might know that there is someone with a gun around a corner, but the characters, unaware of this, start to walk towards that corner. This creates dramatic tension between the characters' limited knowledge and our greater knowledge.

Shakespeare's tragedies such as *Romeo and Juliet* contain a great deal of dramatic irony. We (the audience) often know things that the characters don't and this can create a sense of tension, as well as a desire to stop the characters from saying or doing things that might lead to harm.

Sometimes though, dramatic irony can be harmless or even humorous and we experience mild amusement rather than tension.

The television show *The Simpsons* often employs this kind of humorous irony. For example, in the 'Brother from the Same Planet' episode, we know that Homer has been told to pick up Bart. While he struggles to remember what he has forgotten to do, the family dog, Santa's Little Helper, makes the barking sound 'Bart, Bart!' and Maggie's burp sounds just like the word 'Bart'. Meanwhile, the television screen that Homer is watching flashes the word 'BART' for a retiring football player and fans roll out a banner with the words 'We'll never forget you, Bart' written in huge letters. Finally, in response to all of these reminders, Homer shouts, 'I can't think with all this noise!' Here, the fact that we know what Homer is supposed to be remembering creates comedy.

Q How is Mercutio's shouting out to Romeo about Rosaline an example of dramatic irony? What do we, as an audience, know that Mercutio doesn't?

Act 2 Scene 2



CHARACTERS

Juliet
Romeo
Nurse
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]



IN A NUTSHELL

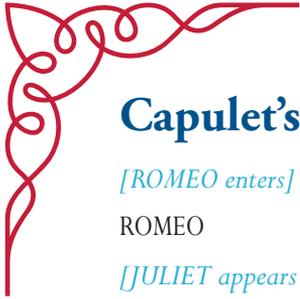
In the orchard of the Capulet mansion, Romeo looks up towards a window and, seeing Juliet, reflects upon her beauty. He listens to her speak of her love for him and then emerges from the shadows, startling her. The couple talk of their love but are interrupted by Juliet's Nurse calling for her. It is agreed that they will marry, and Juliet tells Romeo that she will send someone to him so the wedding can be arranged. The scene ends with neither of the lovers wishing to say the final goodbye.

Before you read

- This scene contains the most famous lines in the play (especially lines 2 and 33). In Romeo's first speech, he admires Juliet's beauty, comparing her to a number of objects and reflecting on what it might be like to be near her.
- Romeo's first line in this scene ('He jests at scars that never felt a wound') is responding to Mercutio's insults. He quickly forgets these when dazzled by Juliet's beauty.
- Note that, early in this scene (before line 49), Romeo is listening to Juliet speak and he comments on what she says. She does not hear him speaking or know that he is there until he startles her, exclaiming: 'I take thee at thy word' (line 49).
- The word 'wherefore' (line 33) is often misunderstood. It means 'why', not 'where'. Juliet is not wondering where Romeo is but why he has to be a Montague, the son of her enemy.



Entreat:	Beg somebody for something
Doff:	Put aside or take off (opposite of don, to put on)
Henceforth:	From now on
Idolatry:	Worship (of something other than God)
Fain:	Gladly
Anon:	Soon, like saying 'in a minute', for example, when your mother calls



Capulet's orchard.

[ROMEO enters]

ROMEO He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[JULIET appears 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,

Who is already sick and pale with grief, 5

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.

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

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.

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, 15

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,

As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven 20

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,

That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET Ay me!

ROMEO [Aside] She speaks. 25

O, speak again, bright angel! For thou art

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

As is a wingèd messenger of heaven

Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes

Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him 30

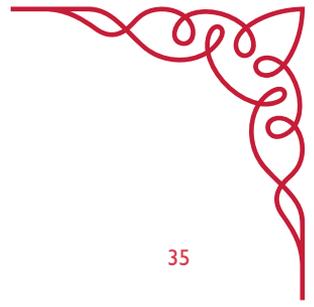


8 **Vestal livery:** Virginal dress. Vestal Virgins were priestesses in charge of keeping the sacred fire alight in the Temple of Vesta in ancient Rome.

13 **Discourses:** Speaks or has a conversation with.

15–17 **Two of the fairest stars ... till they return:** Two of the most beautiful stars have left their places in heaven and have requested that Juliet's eyes take their place.

27–32 **Being o'er my head ... the bosom of the air:** Romeo looks up to Juliet and compares her to a vision of an angel walking on the clouds.



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;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet. 35

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.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, 40
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;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called, 45
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

ROMEO *[To JULIET]* I take thee at thy word.
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised; 50
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.
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself, 55
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

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

ROMEO Neither, fair maid, 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,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here. 65

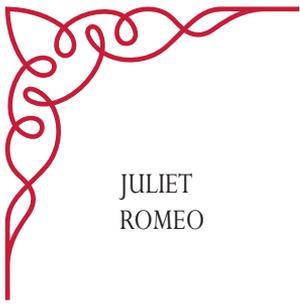
ROMEO With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,



50–51 **Call me but love ... Romeo:** Romeo is willing to change his name (be newly 'baptised') so he can be with Juliet, the daughter of his enemy.

59 **Utterance:** Speech.

66 **O'er-perch:** Fly over.



And what love can do that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

JULIET If they do see thee, they will murder thee. 70
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.

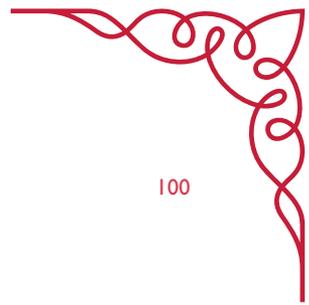
JULIET I would not for the world they saw thee here.
ROMEO I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes; 75
And but thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death proroguèd, wanting of thy love.

JULIET By whose direction found'st thou out this place?
ROMEO By love, who first did prompt me to inquire. 80
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 should adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face, 85
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!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,' 90
And I will take thy word. Yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won, 95
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.



-
- 69 **No stop to me:** No hindrance to me; cannot hold me back.
- 71 **Alack:** An expression of regret, like 'Oh, dear'.
- 72-73 **Look thou ... their enmity:** Your beauty is so powerful that it will protect me from harm.
- 78 **Proroguèd:** Postponed.
- 81 **He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes:** Love advised Romeo, yet, because love is blind, Romeo lends love eyes.
- 82 **Pilot:** Captain of a ship; navigator.
- 88-89 **Fain would I ... farewell compliment:** I would gladly follow the rules of proper conduct, but say goodbye to manners or etiquette.
- 92-93 **At lovers' perjuries / They say Jove laughs:** Jove, or Jupiter, was the king of Roman gods, who often disguised himself in order to have affairs. Thus he laughs along with lovers who lie or disguise the truth.



In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
 And therefore thou mayst think my 'haviour light;
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true 100
 Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,
 But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
 My true love's passion; therefore pardon me,
 And not impute this yielding to light love, 105
 Which the dark night hath so discovered.

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,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb, 110
 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,
 And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO If my heart's dear love – 115

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

ROMEO O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied? 125

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.



- 98–99 **I am too fond ... my 'haviour light:** Juliet confesses to being foolish and is worried that Romeo will think her behaviour immodest.
- 102 **I should have been more strange:** Juliet thinks that she should have been more difficult to win over, more strange rather than familiar.
- 103 **Ere I was ware:** Before I was aware (of your presence).
- 105 **And not impute this yielding to light love:** Juliet asks Romeo again not to judge her love as shallow or immodest.
- 110 **Circled orb:** Circular orbit.
- 123 **Repose:** Another word for rest.

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

[ROMEO starts to move away, as JULIET re-enters, above]

JULIET Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice, 160
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
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 It is my soul that calls upon my name: 165
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET Romeo!

ROMEO My dear?

JULIET At what o'clock tomorrow

Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO At the hour of nine.

JULIET I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then. 170
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,
Remembering how I love thy company.

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

JULIET 'Tis almost morning: I would have thee gone;
And yet no further than a wanton's bird,
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,



156–57 Love goes toward ... with heavy looks: Romeo compares the enthusiasm of a lover heading towards his love to that of a schoolboy leaving school; and he compares the situation of a lover departing from his love to a reluctant student heading off to school. The school day was longer and the school stricter in Shakespeare's day.

158 Hist: Similar to calling someone secretly by whispering, 'Pssst!' More specifically, it is the sound a falconer makes to call his falcons or hawks.

159 Tassel-gentle: A gentle and dearly-loved male falcon (a tercel).

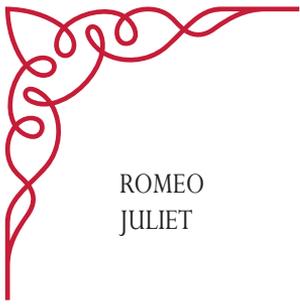
160 Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud: It is dangerous for Juliet to speak in anything but a whisper. The restriction ('bondage') is making her voice croaky ('hoarse').

161 Echo: A nymph from Greek mythology who faded away to become nothing but a voice in a cave. Echo pined for love but Juliet appears fiercer than this.

166 Attending ears: Attentive (listening) ears.

177 Wanton's bird: A bird kept on a string by a spoilt child.

179 Gyves: Chains.



And with a silken thread plucks it back again, 180
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO I would I were thy bird.

JULIET Sweet, so would I;

Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow. 185

[JULIET exits above]

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

[ROMEO exits]



181 **Liberty:** Freedom.

188 **My ghostly Father's cell:** The humble dwelling place ('cell') of the local priest, Friar Laurence ('ghostly' = holy or spiritual).

189 **Dear hap:** Good fortune.



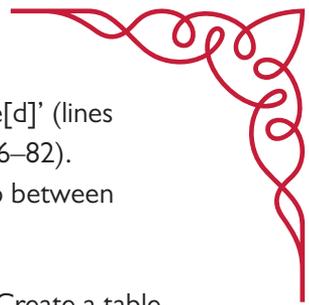
QUESTIONS

- 1 When Romeo first sees Juliet (Act I Scene 5), he compares her with light, claiming she is like a torch that lights a room. At the beginning of this scene how does Romeo take this comparison one step further?
- 2 In the speech that Romeo overhears (lines 33–49), how important does Juliet think someone's name is? What point does she make about names?
- 3 How does Juliet feel about Romeo overhearing what she says? Give evidence.
- 4 Who is the first character to mention the idea of marriage?
- 5 Find a line at the end of the scene that suggests the two lovers do not wish to part from each other.



EXTEND

- 1 How does Romeo's description of Juliet contrast to the language Mercutio uses to describe Rosaline in the previous scene?
- 2 Read lines 10–12 again ('It is my lady ... she speaks'). Why does Shakespeare have Romeo use so many short, disjointed sentences? What do you think he might be showing us about Romeo's state of mind?
- 3 How does Juliet react to Romeo's lyrical or poetic use of language and his declaration of love?



- 4 In this scene, Romeo is described as both a falcon that is ‘lure[d]’ (lines 158–59) and a ‘bird’ that is a ‘wanton’s ... prisoner’ (lines 176–82). What do these images of birds suggest about the relationship between Romeo and Juliet?



- 1 To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Create a table like the following for your notes. Place a tick in the appropriate column and then discuss your findings together.

	Strongly disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Strongly agree
Romeo and Juliet really do love each other.				
Romeo and Juliet are unwise in getting married.				
Romeo and Juliet should slow down – they are going too quickly.				
Getting married will end the feud between their families.				

- 2 You have been given the task of directing a stage production of the opening section of this scene (lines 1–49), in which Romeo overhears Juliet speaking. Discuss, or write a paragraph, about how you would direct the following theatrical aspects:
- set design
 - positioning and movement of actors (blocking)
 - acting style and voice (e.g. volume, pauses, speed of delivery).

Zeffirelli and Luhrmann: DVD (‘What light through yonder window breaks?’)



View Zeffirelli and Luhrmann’s interpretations of the balcony scene and discuss the following questions.

- Which version do you think better conveys the fear and danger that the situation poses for Romeo?
- How do the films portray Juliet’s character differently?
- Discuss how the soundtrack (music and other sounds) of each film version is used to create a romantic mood or atmosphere.



Holy Saint Francis ...

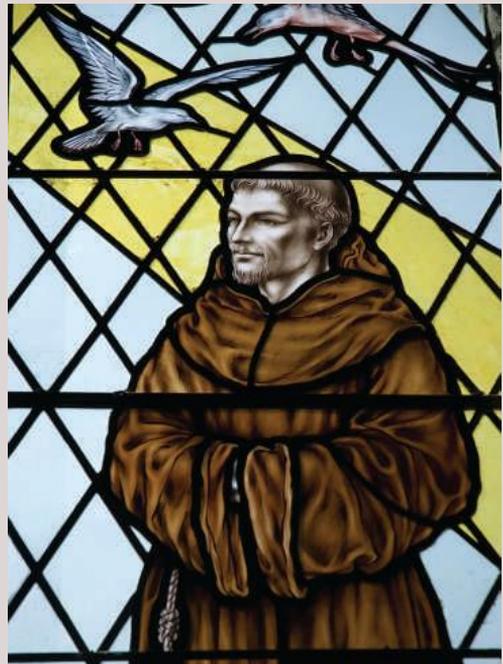
Friars and the Roman Church

Friar Laurence, the priest in Act 2 Scene 3, is a member of a Roman Catholic order (or organisation) called the Franciscans, begun by Saint Francis of Assisi (1181–1226). Friar Laurence would have an important and respected place in Verona's social order. As a Catholic priest, he was bound to remain unmarried and, as a Franciscan friar, he would have chosen a life of poverty.

When Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, worshipping in a Catholic Church in England was illegal and considered unpatriotic. The monasteries in England had all been closed down and the only Catholic priests in the country were either on the run or in hiding with Catholic families. The Pope had excommunicated the Queen, Elizabeth I, and various priests had been involved in plots to bring down her government. It is, therefore, likely that many of Shakespeare's audience would have viewed the Friar with suspicion.

Of course, because the play is set in Catholic Italy, Shakespeare avoids the complications of these religious issues. While Shakespeare would have been required to attend Protestant church services, he had many Catholic connections, and it is likely that his father remained a Roman Catholic at a time when this was very dangerous. Many critics have suggested that Shakespeare had strong Catholic sympathies and it is likely that he played the part of Friar Laurence.

For more information on the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformation, refer to the notes on Elizabethan England (pages 3–5).



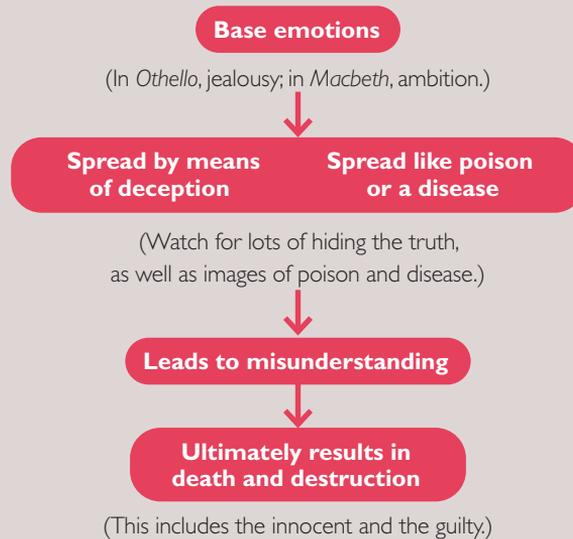
Church window showing Saint Francis of Assisi

Thinking about characters' fatal flaws

Shakespeare's plays are not just fascinating stories; they also communicate some important recurring ideas or messages, which are known as **themes**.

In Shakespeare's tragedies such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*, one very important theme is the notion of a character's **personal weakness** leading to ruin. Because the end result of such weaknesses is usually death and destruction, some authors call them **fatal flaws**. They have also been labelled **base emotions** (the lowest or most negative human qualities) and are the opposite of virtues or positive human qualities such as love, patience, compassion and humility. Examples of base emotions or personal weaknesses in Shakespeare's plays are jealousy (in *Othello*) and greed or ruthless ambition (in *Macbeth*).

The **structure** of Shakespeare's tragedies (the sequence of events and the development of ideas) is similar for *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Typically, a character's fatal flaw spreads to other characters by means of deception. It spreads like poison or a disease, leads to misunderstanding and ultimately results in destruction. The following diagram might make this idea clearer:



In *Romeo and Juliet*, two base emotions dominate several of the characters' words and actions.

a Hatred or bitterness

The play's Prologue highlights the 'ancient grudge' (line 3) between the Montagues and Capulets (also called the 'parents' strife' in line 8) as one of the primary causes of the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.

b Impatience or recklessness

▶ A second fatal flaw that winds its way through the play, and that is also partially to blame for the play's tragic outcome, is the way some characters rush into situations without due consideration for the consequences of their actions.

Q Copy and complete the following table into your workbook to show your understanding of the role of personal weaknesses in the play so far.

	Characters who have demonstrated this quality so far	Ways these qualities are demonstrated in words and actions
Hatred or bitterness		
Impatience or recklessness		

Look for how Shakespeare communicates these ideas throughout the remainder of *Romeo and Juliet*. Watch for the characters' personal weaknesses, for examples of deception, for references to disease and poison, for instances of misunderstanding and for how all of these ultimately result in tragedy.

Act 2 Scene 3

CHARACTERS

Friar Laurence
Romeo



IN A NUTSHELL

Friar Laurence makes a comparison between human nature and the flower he is holding, which contains both medicine and poison. Romeo enters and tells him of his love for Juliet. The Friar questions the depth of Romeo's love in light of his recent 'love' for Rosaline; however, he agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet, believing it might end the feud between the two families.

Before you read

- Many of the lines in this scene rhyme, and sometimes either Romeo or the Friar will complete a rhyming couplet begun by the other character. This suggests that the exchanges between them are quite quick, so don't pause for a long time between lines when reading them. If you deliver Romeo's lines, remember that you are impatient and very eager to be married.

- The long speech delivered in rhyming couplets at the beginning of the scene establishes the Friar's knowledge of poisons and medicines, foreshadowing the potion he later gives to Juliet. It also establishes his theology or view of the world. He sees creation as good but also sees the potential evil has to undermine this goodness. It is thought that Shakespeare himself may have played the part of the Friar in an early production of the play.



Grace:	Goodness
Virtues:	Good or moral qualities
Vices:	Bad or immoral qualities
Benedicite:	A greeting and a blessing (pronounced in five syllables: <i>ben-e-dik-i-tay</i>)
Canker:	A cancer or infection
Rancour:	Hatred and bitterness
Physic:	Medicine or remedy

Friar Laurence's cell.

[FRIAR LAURENCE enters, carrying a basket]

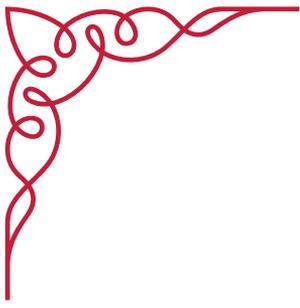
FRIAR LAURENCE The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
 Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
 And fleckèd darkness like a drunkard reels
 From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.
 Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,
 The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,
 I must up-fill this osier cage of ours
 With baleful weeds and precious-juicèd flowers.
 The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb:
 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.

5

10



- 3 **Fleckèd:** Marked with spots.
- 4 **Titan's fiery wheels:** Titan, the sun-god in Greek mythology, drove his chariot across the sky each day.
- 7 **Osier cage:** Wicker basket.
- 8 **Baleful:** Evil or poisonous.
- 9–14 **The earth that's nature's ... and yet all different:** The Friar personifies nature as a mother and observes that, while she is associated with death (a 'tomb'), she also produces life (making her 'a womb'). She produces all kinds of diversity and every plant has a different virtue.
- 11 **Divers:** Diverse or different.



O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies 15
 In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities;
 For nought so vile that on the earth doth live
 But to the earth some special good doth give;
 Nor aught so good but strained from that fair use
 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse. 20
 Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
 And vice sometimes by action dignified.
 Within the infant rind of this weak flower
 Poison hath residence and medicine power:
 For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part; 25
 Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
 Two such opposèd kings encamp them still
 In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will;
 And where the worser is predominant,
 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant. 30

[ROMEO enters]

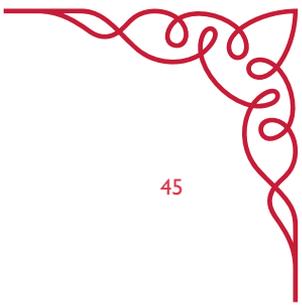
ROMEO Good morrow, Father.

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.
 Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye, 35
 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
 Thou art up-roused by some distemperature; 40
 Or if not so, then here I hit it right,
 Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.



-
- 15 **Mickle:** Great.
 - 19–20 **Nor aught so good ... stumbling on abuse:** The Friar states that nothing is so good that it is incorruptible. In the case of plants, they can be put to wrongful use ('aught' = anything).
 - 23–28 **Within the infant rind ... grace and rude will:** Friar Laurence describes the way that plants can contain both poison and medicine: two contradictory substances.
 - 29–30 **And where the worser ... eats up that plant:** The Friar compares his previous image to humans, who can display both good and bad qualities; if the bad controls us, it will destroy us like a disease will destroy a plant ('predominant' = most common; 'canker' = a worm that destroys plants).
 - 36 **And where care lodges, sleep will never lie:** A head full of cares or worries will never get to sleep.
 - 37–38 **But where unbruised youth ... golden sleep doth reign:** Inexperienced or innocent youth sleeps well.
 - 40 **Distemperature:** Mental disorder.
 - 41 **Hit it:** Guess it, as in hitting the target.



ROMEO That last is true; the sweeter rest was mine.
 FRIAR LAURENCE God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?
 ROMEO With Rosaline, my ghostly Father? No! 45
 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,
 Where on a sudden one hath wounded me, 50
 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.
 FRIAR LAURENCE Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift: 55
 Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.
 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;
 And all combined, save what thou must combine 60
 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.
 FRIAR LAURENCE Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here! 65
 Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
 So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies
 Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
 Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine
 Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline! 70
 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 my ancient ears.
 Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit 75
 Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.



-
- 45 **Ghostly:** Holy or spiritual.
 50 **Hath wounded me:** He has been shot with Cupid's arrow.
 54 **Intercession:** Prayer.
 54 **Steads:** Benefits.
 55–56 **Be plain ... riddling shrift:** Tell me your problem in plain and simple language so I can provide you with a plain and simple cure.
 69–78 **Jesu Maria, what ... were all for Rosaline:** The Friar is shocked at Romeo's change of heart and reminds Romeo of the sorrow he expressed and the tears he shed for Rosaline ('Jesu Maria' = by Jesus and Mary, a mild oath; 'sallow' = unnaturally pale or yellowish; 'brine' = salt water, referring to the abundance of tears Romeo has previously shed over being rejected by Rosaline).



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

ROMEO Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

FRIAR LAURENCE For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

ROMEO And bad'st me bury love.

FRIAR LAURENCE Not in a grave,
 To lay one in, another out to have.

ROMEO I pray thee, chide not; she whom I love now 85
 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 and could not spell.
 But come, young waverer; come, go with me.
 In one respect I'll thy assistant be; 90
 For this alliance may so happy prove,
 To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

ROMEO O let us hence! I stand on sudden haste.

FRIAR LAURENCE Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast.

[Both exit]

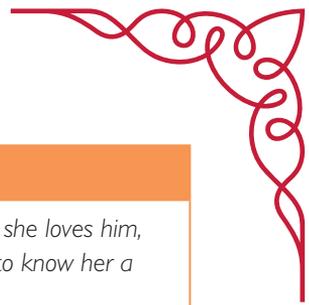


- 80 **Women may fall when there's no strength in men:** Women can be excused for being weak when men are as weak as this.
- 81 **Chid'st me:** Told me off; scolded me.
- 82 **Doting:** Childish or silly infatuation; puppy love.
- 88 **Thy love did read by rote:** Your love was not real because you were just repeating things that you had memorised.



QUESTIONS

- 1 How does Friar Laurence react to Romeo telling him that he is no longer in love with Rosaline?
- 2 What is Friar Laurence's motive for marrying Romeo and Juliet? Use a quote as evidence.
- 3 The Friar tells Romeo not to be hasty or impatient. He frequently uses words like 'wise ... slow ... patient'. Do you think the Friar is being just as hasty in marrying the couple? Why do you think he should be more careful than he is?
- 4 What do you think the following characters' reactions would be to the Friar marrying Romeo and Juliet? Create a table similar to the one on the following page for your notes. Write them in modern English and use first person ('I').



A suggestion for Benvolio's reaction has been included here.

Character	Character's reactions
Benvolio	<i>I'm happy that Romeo's found someone he really loves and that she loves him, but I'm a little worried he's rushing into it. Maybe he should get to know her a little better before he marries.</i>
Capulet	
Nurse	
Tybalt	
Mercutio	



- 1 List several examples of **personification** that Shakespeare uses in the opening lines (1–7) of this scene.
- 2 What do you think Friar Laurence means when he says, 'She [Rosaline] knew well / Thy love did read by rote and could not spell' (lines 87–88)?
- 3 Read lines 49–52 closely:
 - a Romeo is comparing love with a(n) _____.
 - b He is comparing the Friar with a _____.
 - c This is an extended _____ or a conceit.
 - d How might these lines relate to Cupid?
- 4 In the first half of this scene, Shakespeare includes two powerful examples of **antithesis** (opposing ideas or concepts). Create and complete a table similar to the following for your notes.

	Negative qualities	Positive qualities
Plants / flowers	They contain 'poison'	They also contain ...
Humans	They demonstrate ...	They also demonstrate 'grace' or 'virtue'





- a What negative quality is demonstrated by Romeo in this scene and how does he show it?
- b What point is the Friar making by comparing humans to plants in this way (see lines 23–30)?



- 1 Do you think it is wise for Romeo and Juliet to marry each other in secret? Why or why not?
- 2 If you were to direct a stage performance of this scene, how would you instruct the actor playing Romeo to show his impatience using his voice and actions?



A challenge, on my life ...

Duelling

In the next scene, Mercutio and Benvolio discuss the challenge to a duel that Tybalt has sent to Romeo's house. Duels were a popular way of settling disputes in Italy, Spain, France and England, especially among members of the upper classes who were trained in fencing. People fought duels in order to defend their honour or reputation. In this case, Tybalt believes that Romeo, by gatecrashing the Capulets' party, has insulted them and determines to defend his family's honour.

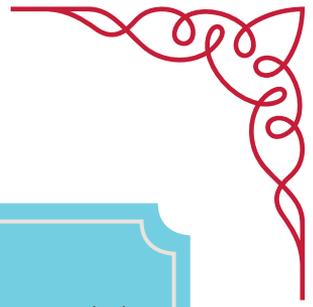
Duels were sometimes fought by individuals but often involved more than two people. The rules for any duel would be made clear before it was fought. Special observers were present to make sure that the rules were followed and that the combatants were not carrying any hidden weapons or magical charms, which they might use to protect themselves or harm their opponents. Duels were fought with rapiers (long and narrow two-edged swords) at this time, but later pistols were used.



Medieval illustration of fencing

In the medieval world people believed that God's judgement could be shown through trial by combat (an early type of duel). By the time Shakespeare was writing, many believed that fighting a duel contradicted the will of God. In the 1600s, the Catholic Church threatened anyone who took part in a duel with excommunication (banishment from the Church).

Act 2 Scene 4



CHARACTERS

Mercutio
Romeo
Nurse
Benvolio
Peter



IN A NUTSHELL

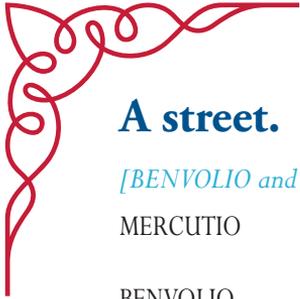
Benvolio and Mercutio discuss the challenge to a duel that Tybalt has sent to Romeo, and Mercutio jokes that Romeo is so badly wounded by love that he will not be able to fight. Romeo arrives and while he is joking with Mercutio, the Nurse and a servant (Peter) enter. Mercutio mocks and teases the Nurse before leaving with Benvolio. When the Nurse questions Romeo's motives, he reassures her by telling her that he has organised the wedding for that afternoon.

Before you read

- Watch for the **puns** occurring throughout this scene, especially when Romeo and Mercutio are talking with each other, and when Mercutio talks about the Nurse. Even Peter (a servant who accompanies the Nurse) joins in their jokes.
- Mercutio uses various foreign words in this scene. In particular, he mocks duelling and the language associated with it (e.g. the *passado* and the *punto reverso*, which are moves or actions in a sword fight). However, in greeting Romeo with the French word 'Bonjour', Mercutio is probably making fun of Romeo, who uses fashionable French words and could be wearing French clothes or a costume from the previous night's party.
- The early part of this scene is rich in **dramatic irony** (see page 66). Mercutio thinks Romeo's odd behaviour is still caused by Rosaline, but the audience knows better.



- Wench:** A girl or a woman; in this case, it probably means mistress or prostitute
- Cleft:** A substantial gap or crack
- Salutation:** Greeting
- Bawd:** Prostitute
- An a':** If he



A street.

[BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO enter]

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 Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline, torments him so, that he will sure run mad. 5

BENVOLIO Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet, hath sent a letter to his father's house.

MERCUTIO A challenge, on my life.

BENVOLIO Romeo will answer it.

MERCUTIO Any man that can write may answer a letter. 10

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; run through the ear with a love-song; the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft: and is he a man to encounter Tybalt? 15

BENVOLIO Why, what is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO More than Prince of Cats, I can tell you. O, he is the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing prick-song: keeps time, distance, and proportion; he rests his minim rests, one, two, and the third in your bosom. The very butcher of a silk button, 20
a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause! Ah, the immortal passado! The punto reverso! The hai!

BENVOLIO The what?

MERCUTIO The pox of such antic, lispings, affecting fantasticoes; these new tuners of accents! 'By Jesu, a very good blade! A very tall man! 25
A very good whore!' Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire,



3 **His man:** His servant.

8 **Challenge:** Tybalt has challenged Romeo to a duel.

13–14 **The very pin ... butt-shaft:** The bull's eye of his heart has been hit with Cupid's arrow.

18 **Prick-song:** Musical notation, a well-written song; Mercutio is being vulgar (punning on the word 'prick') and suggesting Tybalt is an accurate fighter.

18–20 **Keeps time ... third in your bosom:** Musical language; he counts to two and then on the third beat, plunges a sword in your chest.

22–23 **The immortal passado! The punto reverso! The hai!** Different movements in a sword fight.

25 **The pox:** The plague. Mercutio is cursing people who pretend to be something that they are not.

25 **Antic:** Fantastic or old-fashioned.

25 **Affected fantasticoes:** Posers who speak in fake, posh accents.

27 **Lamentable:** Sorrowful.

that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these pardon-me's, who stand so much on the new form, that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O, their bones, their bones!

30

[ROMEO enters]

BENVOLIO Here comes Romeo! Here comes Romeo!

MERCUTIO Without his roe, like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, 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 be-rhyme her); Dido a dowdy; Cleopatra a gipsy; Helen and Hero hildings and harlots; Thisbe a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose – Signor Romeo, bonjour! There's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

35

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

40

MERCUTIO The slip, sir, the slip; can you not conceive?

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.

45

ROMEO Meaning, to curtsy.

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.

50

MERCUTIO Right.

28–29 **Strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these pardon-me's:** Mercutio mocks rich people for being parasites who speak in false accents.

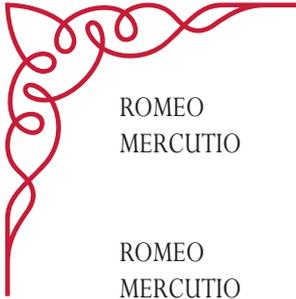
29–30 **Who stand so much ... the old bench:** Who think so much about the new manner that they are uncomfortable in their old ways. Mercutio puns on 'form', meaning manner but also a seat.

33–34 **Without his roe ... art thou fishified:** An elaborate series of puns on fish. Mercutio's meaning is obscure and difficult for modern audiences.

34–38 **Now is he ... not to the purpose:** Mercutio mockingly compares Romeo's love to other famous lovers from legend and history. Petrarch was a medieval Italian poet who invented the sonnet and addressed a number of these poems to Laura; romantic Elizabethan men often copied his convention in writing sonnets to their beloved. Helen of Troy (said to be the most beautiful woman in the ancient world) and Cleopatra of Egypt would be known to many modern readers. Dido was queen of Carthage, and Hero was a priestess. Four of these (Cleopatra, Dido, Hero and Thisbe) committed suicide for love. By citing these lovers Mercutio is not only making fun of the pretentiousness of romantics, but also mocks the melancholic (unhappy) state of mind of the sighing lover.

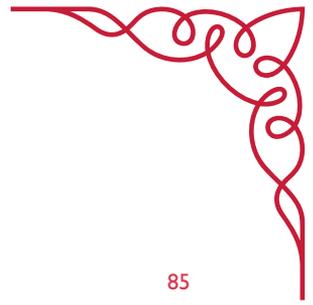
39 **You gave us the counterfeit:** You deceived us.

41 **The slip, sir, the slip; can you not conceive?** Mercutio is frustrated that Romeo does not get his joke, which is a play on the words slip (a counterfeit coin) and slop (clothes), from line 39.



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. 55
 ROMEO O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness.
 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 have 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 goose? 60
 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. 65
 MERCUTIO Thy wit is a very bitter sweetening; 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!
 ROMEO I stretch it out for that word 'broad', which, added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose. 70
 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 drivelling love is like a great natural, that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole. 75
 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.
 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. 80

- 
- 52 **Why, then is my pump well flowered:** A rude play on words, meaning his shoes are patterned with flowers and also exaggerating his sexual activity.
 55–56 **Solely singular ... the singleness:** More puns relating to footwear.
 59–67 **If our wits ... sweet goose:** Puns relating to geese. A 'goose' could be a silly person but was also a slang term for prostitute ('broad' = indecent; 'sweetening' = apple sauce).
 68–69 **Wit of cheveril ... an ell broad:** Cheveril is a kind of leather that is remarkably elastic; by this description, Romeo has a wide reaching, imaginative wit that can keep a joke going ('ell' = 75 cm).
 74–75 **This drivelling love ... his bauble in a hole:** Mercutio is again disdainful and critical of 'drivelling' love which he compares to a great idiot ('natural') who hides his 'bauble' (a stick carried by a professional jester) in a hole. You probably know Mercutio well enough by now to guess the bauble and the hole he has in mind.
 77–81 **Thou desirest me ... argument no longer:** Relates to Mercutio's argument (or his joking) but again there is a lot of punning about sexual intercourse ('tale' = story or penis).



ROMEO Here's goodly gear!

[NURSE and PETER enter]

MERCUTIO A sail, a sail!

BENVOLIO Two, two: a shirt and a smock.

NURSE Peter!

85

PETER Anon!

NURSE My fan, Peter.

MERCUTIO Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer face.

NURSE God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

MERCUTIO God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.

90

NURSE Is it good den?

MERCUTIO 'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

NURSE Out upon you! What a man are you!

ROMEO One, gentlewoman, that God hath made for himself to mar.

95

NURSE By my troth, it is well said: 'For himself to mar,' quoth he? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young 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.

100

NURSE You say well.

MERCUTIO Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, in faith; wisely, wisely.

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

BENVOLIO She will indite him to some supper.

MERCUTIO A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

105

ROMEO What hast thou found?



82 **Here's goodly gear:** Perhaps good stuff or material to joke about, referring to the Nurse.

83 **A sail, a sail:** Mercutio imitates the call that sailors give when a ship is on the horizon, which might be a reference to the Nurse's bulk and her clothes flowing in the wind.

89–93 **God ye good ... prick of noon:** While the Nurse bids them good morning, Mercutio responds with 'Good den' (good evening) because the hand of the clock suggests noon. Mercutio uses the word 'prick' on purpose.

94 **Out upon you:** An exclamation of shock but it could be delivered more mildly than this.

95 **One, gentlewoman ... himself to mar:** Romeo gently mocks his friend ('mar' = ruin).

96 **By my troth:** Upon my word.

96 **Quoth he:** Said he.

102 **Yea, is the worst well?** Mercutio is addressing Romeo's last comment, and means something like: 'Are you pleased with this answer?'

103–04 **Confidence ... indite:** See **A word about malapropisms** on pages 93–94.



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

[Singing]

*An old hare hoar,
And an old hare hoar, 110
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 Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner, thither. 115
I will follow you.

MERCUTIO Farewell, ancient lady; farewell,
[Singing] *Lady, lady, lady.*

[MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO exit]

NURSE I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this, that was so full of his ropery? 120

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 skains-mates – And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure? 125

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. 130

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 inquire you out. What she bade me say, I will keep



107–14 **No hare, sir ... ere it be spent:** Mercutio puns on hare (an animal), hoar (old and grey) and whore (a prostitute). Christians were not permitted to eat meat during the period of Lent (the forty days preceding Easter), so a 'lenten pie' contains no meat. The song suggests that a prostitute is good meat during Lent but that if she is old she is not worth paying for. Mercutio implies that the Nurse is an old prostitute and this explains her being highly offended.

119 **Saucy merchant:** Offensive fellow.

120 **Ropery:** See **A word about malapropisms** on pages 93–94.

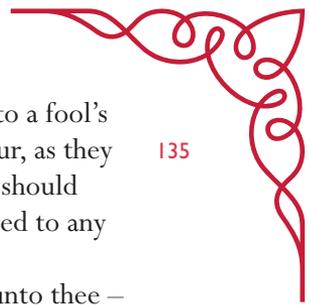
122 **Stand to:** Tolerate.

123–24 **I'll take him down ... such Jacks:** The Nurse insists that she would fight Mercutio ('take him down') even if he had the strength of twenty men ('Jacks').

125 **Scurvy knave:** Rude and disgusting troublemaker.

125 **Flirt-gills:** Flirts; loose women.

126 **Skains-mates:** Villains.



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 behaviour, 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. 135

ROMEO Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee –

NURSE Good heart, and, in faith, I will tell her as much. Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman. 140

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 gentleman-like offer.

ROMEO Bid her devise 145

Some means to come to shrift this afternoon,
And there she shall at Friar Laurence's cell
Be shrived and married. Here is for thy pains.

NURSE No truly sir; not a penny.

ROMEO Go to! I say you shall. 150

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,
Which to the high top-gallant of my joy 155
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.

ROMEO What say'st thou, my dear Nurse? 160

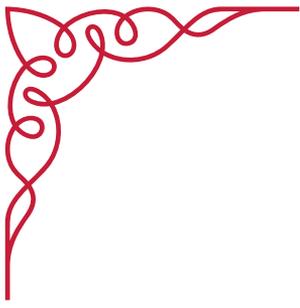
NURSE Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

ROMEO I warrant thee, my man's as true as steel.

NURSE Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady –
Lord, Lord! When 'twas a little prating thing – 165



-
- 138 **Weak:** Underhanded; contemptible.
 - 142 **Mark me:** Listen to me.
 - 146 **Shrift:** Confession.
 - 148 **Shrived:** Absolved of her sin.
 - 148 **Here is for thy pains:** Romeo tries to give the Nurse money for her trouble.
 - 154 **Cords made like a tackled stair:** A kind of rope for Romeo to climb.
 - 155 **Top-gallant:** Summit.
 - 156 **Convoy:** Access or help.
 - 165 **Prating:** Talkative.



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 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 versal world. Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter? 170

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 sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it. 175

ROMEO Commend me to thy lady.

NURSE Ay, a thousand times.

[ROMEO exits]

Peter!

PETER Anon!

NURSE Peter, take my fan, and go before, and apace. 180

[PETER exits, followed by NURSE]



166–67 Fain lay knife aboard: Gladly win her.

167 As lief: As willingly.

170 Pale as any clout in the versal world: Pale as any dishcloth in the whole world ('versal' being an abbreviated form of 'universal').

170–75 Doth not rosemary ... good to hear it: 'R' was considered the dog's letter because it sounded like a dog growling. Juliet denies that the name Romeo begins with so harsh a sound ('sententious' = the Nurse means sentences or proverbs, which is another malapropism).

180 Apace: Quickly.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Why does Mercutio believe Romeo will not be able to stand up to Tybalt's challenge to a duel?
- 2 When Romeo arrives, he and Mercutio joke for a while. Why does this make Mercutio happy?
- 3 Besides his abundance of vulgar puns, Mercutio's language is playful and humorous in this scene. See if you can find examples where he describes Juliet's Nurse as:
 - a large
 - b ugly
 - c old.
- 4 **Alliteration** involves repeating the opening sound of a word, as in 'big blue bucket of bubbles'. See if you can find two examples of alliteration used by Mercutio which reinforce his playful use of language.



- 1 Even Benvolio does not understand everything suggested when Mercutio mocks Tybalt. What do you think he is suggesting about Tybalt in lines 17–30?
- 2 There is a great deal of **punning** in this scene, always begun by or directed to Mercutio. See if you can find examples of puns that are used. Don't forget, puns work when you say the words aloud. Here are two examples:
 - Mercutio and Romeo, in lines 44–50, play with the words 'courtesy' (politeness) and 'curtsey' (bow at the knees).
 - Romeo, in line 52, boasts that his 'pump is well-flowered' (referring to the pattern on his shoe but also boasting, perhaps unrealistically, that he has 'deflowered' many virgins).
- 3 What might Shakespeare be intending to show us about the character of Mercutio by having his speech contain so many puns?
- 4 How is the language Romeo uses in this scene different from the way he spoke to Juliet, or even to the Friar, in earlier scenes? Why do you think this is the case?
- 5 In this scene, how does Shakespeare add to his earlier characterisation of Juliet's Nurse as a likeable character? Consider what she says and how she says it.

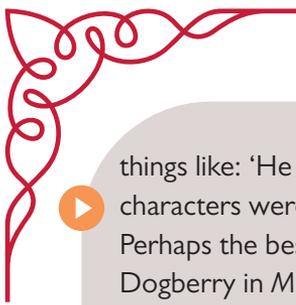
A word about malapropisms

In the Australian comedy *Kath and Kim*, the characters often use the wrong words to communicate what they wish to say. In one episode, instead of saying, 'I want to be affluent, Mum,' Kim says, 'I want to be effluent.' Affluent means rich, while effluent means sewage or industrial waste. The result of replacing a word with a similar-sounding word that means something completely different can be humorous, and is known as **malapropism**.

The character Michael Scott in the US television series *The Office* is also prone to malapropisms. In one episode he talks about employing new staff to 'euthanise this place'. He means enthuse. Euthanasia is voluntary suicide, and to euthanise is to assist someone in ending his or her life. In another episode, when Michael Scott is donating to charity he says: 'I consider myself a great philanderer'. He means philanthropist (a wealthy person who gives generously to charity) rather than a philanderer (an unfaithful man who sleeps around).

The term malapropism comes from the name of Mrs Malaprop, a character in Richard Sheridan's humorous play, *The Rivals* (1775). In this play, Mrs Malaprop says





things like: ‘He is the very pineapple [she means ‘pinnacle’] of politeness.’ Shakespeare’s characters were using malapropisms many years before they were given this name. Perhaps the best-known Shakespearean character who frequently uses malapropisms is Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing*. For example, in Act 3 Scene 5 Dogberry says ‘comparisons are odorous’ when he means ‘comparisons are odious’.

Malapropism occurs in Act 2 Scene 4 of *Romeo and Juliet* (lines 103–4).

NURSE If you be he, sir, then I desire some confidence with you.
BENVOLIO [To *MERCUTIO*] She will indite him to some supper.

When the Nurse says ‘confidence’, she means ‘conference’. She does not use the wrong word on purpose. However, when Benvolio says ‘She will indite him to supper’ instead of ‘invite him to supper’, he does this deliberately, in order to make fun of the Nurse’s language. Later in the scene, the Nurse describes Mercutio’s behaviour as ‘a ropery’, when she means to say ‘a roguery’.

Q Can you think of any examples of malapropisms that people might use today? Have you have heard a younger person use a word incorrectly, giving a totally different meaning from what they intended?

Act 2 Scene 5

CHARACTERS

Juliet
Nurse



IN A NUTSHELL

Juliet eagerly awaits news from Romeo. When the Nurse arrives, she teases Juliet by endlessly straying from the subject and not telling her what Romeo has said. Eventually the Nurse tells Juliet that Romeo will be waiting to marry her at Friar Laurence’s cell that afternoon.

Before you read

- Juliet is impatient for the Nurse to return with news of what Romeo has said. If you play the part of Juliet, you should consider how to express her frustration.



Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.
O God, she comes!

[NURSE and PETER enter]

O honey Nurse, what news?

Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

NURSE Peter, stay at the gate.

20

[PETER exits]

JULIET Now, good sweet Nurse – O Lord, why look'st 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.

NURSE I am a-weary; give me leave awhile.

25

Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt 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?

Do you not see that I am out of breath?

30

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.

Is thy news good, or bad? Answer to that;

35

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 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?

40

JULIET No, no; but all this did I know before.

What says he of our marriage? What of that?

45

NURSE Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!

It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back – the other side – O, my back, my back!

Beshrew your heart for sending me about,

To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

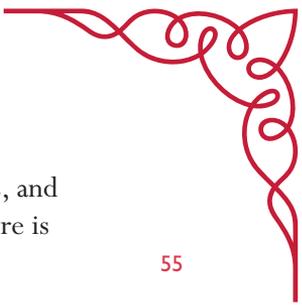
50



17 **Unwieldy:** Awkward and heavy.

24 **So sour a face:** The Nurse is wearing an unhappy expression, presumably to wind up Juliet.

49 **Beshrew:** A mild curse.



JULIET I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet Nurse, tell me: what says my love?

NURSE Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a virtuous – Where is your mother? 55

JULIET Where is my mother? Why, she is within;
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest:
'Your love says, like an honest gentleman,
"Where is your mother?"'

NURSE O God's lady dear!
Are you so hot? Marry, come up, I trow. 60
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

JULIET Here's such a coil! Come, what says Romeo?

NURSE Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

JULIET I have. 65

NURSE Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence's cell;
There stays a husband to make you a wife.
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks;
They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.
Hie you to church; I must another way, 70
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,
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.
Go; I'll to dinner. Hie you to the cell. 75

JULIET Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell!

[Both exit]

- 
-
- 60 **Hot:** Eager or impatient.
- 60 **I trow:** I swear.
- 61 **Poultice:** Medicine or ointment applied with a cloth.
- 63 **Here's such a coil:** What a fuss you're making.
- 68 **Wanton blood:** The passionate or uncontrolled blood.
- 76 **Hie to high fortune:** I will hurry to my good fortune.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What excuses does the Nurse give for not delivering the news to Juliet straight away?
- 2 What contradiction does Juliet point out in the Nurse's words and behaviour?
- 3 List some tactics that Juliet uses to try to persuade the Nurse to tell her the news from Romeo.



EXTEND

- 1 What is Juliet's state of mind at the beginning of this scene (lines 1–18)? How does Shakespeare show this in Juliet's language?
- 2 One way that Shakespeare has his characters convey extremes of emotion is by **repetition** of words and phrases.
 - a What words does Juliet repeat in lines 28 and 52?
 - b How is Shakespeare using the repetition of these words by Juliet to convey her extreme emotion?
- 3 One of the **base emotions** (or personal weaknesses) that we can clearly see in Romeo as well as in Juliet is impatience: they are full of recklessness and haste and seem to be rushing into things very quickly. If you look again at **Thinking about characters' fatal flaws** on page 77, you can see that impatience spreads by means of deception or hiding the truth. How is the Nurse helping to spread the impatience in this scene? What do you think might happen in later scenes as a result?



DISCUSS

- 1 How would you feel if you were Juliet and had been told that you would be married in the next hour or two?
- 2 What facial expressions and actions do you think lines 64–76 suggest should be used by an actor playing the part of Juliet?



Till holy church incorporate two in one ...

Marriage and wedding ceremonies

Juliet is not quite 14 and although we don't know Romeo's exact age he is certainly still a teenager. When Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, girls could legally marry at 12 and boys at 14, but most people married in their early 20s.

It was common for rich parents to arrange early marriages for their children in order to protect the family's wealth and property. Sometimes these marriages were arranged shortly after the child's birth. Poorer people had more choice in whom they married but still had to seek their parents' permission whether they were male or female. Many



could not afford a church wedding but were recognised as married if they made their promises publicly (these were known as *de presenti* promises). However, most followed up their *de presenti* promises with a later church ceremony – hence, many brides in church were already pregnant.

The idea of marrying for love was becoming more popular around Shakespeare's time. Married couples would expect to have quite a few children and, as it was very difficult to obtain a divorce, they would usually stay married for life.

Act 2 Scene 6

CHARACTERS

Romeo
Juliet
Friar Laurence



IN A NUTSHELL

Friar Laurence advises Romeo to be calmer or less extreme in his approach to love. Juliet arrives and the couple exit with the Friar to be married.

Before you read

- Romeo and Juliet are in a great hurry to be married and this should be shown in the way they speak and act.
- Friar Laurence's speech (lines 9–15) warns the couple to show restraint in their love ('love moderately'). He warns Romeo that rushing into their relationship is as dangerous as mixing fire and gunpowder. He also claims that too much of a good thing (like over-indulging in sweet honey) can become sickening or unenjoyable. 'These violent delights have violent ends' could be seen to foreshadow the chaos of the play's conclusion.



Chide: Reproach or criticise

Moderately: With restraint or not in an extreme manner

Tardy: Late



Friar Laurence's cell.

[FRIAR LAURENCE and ROMEO enter]

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
That one short minute gives me in her sight. 5
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.

FRIAR LAURENCE These violent delights have violent ends
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder, 10
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;
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow. 15

[JULIET enters]

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,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity. 20

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
Be heaped like mine and that thy skill be more 25
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath

2 **After hours:** The future.

3–5 **But come what sorrow ... gives me in her sight:** Romeo argues that whatever future sorrow he experiences cannot destroy the joy of one minute with Juliet.

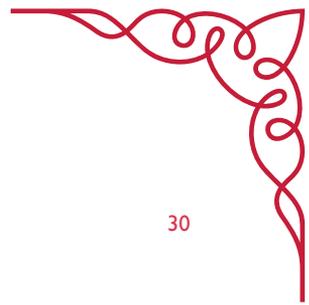
17 **Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint:** Romeo presents Juliet as being so light-footed that the stones she treads upon will last forever.

18–20 **A lover may bstride ... so light is vanity:** The Friar presents lovers as lighter than air (so they walk on cobwebs and do not fall) and their love as 'vanity' compared with divine love ('gossamer' = cobwebs; 'wanton' = carefree).

21 **Ghostly:** Holy or spiritual.

23 **As much to him, else is his thanks too much:** My greetings to him also, or else I don't deserve his thanks.

26 **Blazon:** Describe.



This neighbour air, and let rich music's tongue
 Unfold the imagined happiness that both
 Receive in either by this dear encounter.

JULIET Conceit, more rich in matter than in words, 30
 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.

FRIAR LAURENCE Come, come with me, and we will make short work; 35
 For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
 Till holy church incorporate two in one.

[All exit]



- 27 **This neighbour air:** The surrounding air.
- 30–32 **Conceit, more rich ... that can count their worth:** Juliet dismisses the romantic language Romeo employs. She asserts that it is the substance of love which matters ('conceit' = imagination).
- 36 **By your leaves:** With your permission.
- 36–37 **You shall ... incorporate two in one:** Marriage, according to Genesis 2:24, is the joining of two separate lives into one family, thus 'the two become one'.



QUESTIONS

The Friar warns, 'The sweetest honey / Is loathsome in his own deliciousness' (lines 11–12). What advice is he giving the couple?



EXTEND

1 In this brief scene, both Romeo and Juliet show signs of impatience or of rushing into things recklessly. Create a table like the one below, adding more examples from the text.

Aspect of language	Evidence from the text
Specific words used	'haste'
Repetition of words and phrases	'violence'
Punctuation and sentence length	short, abrupt sentences
Antithesis or contrast of words, ideas and characters	'swift' and 'slow'
Images	gunpowder

2 In the play, we don't see the actual marriage take place – it is only hinted at. Why do you think Shakespeare makes this dramatic decision?



A word about foreshadowing

When the creepy music starts in a movie, you know something frightening or terrible is about to happen! It's like the music is sending out a warning or a signal. In a similar way, authors give us hints or warnings about what will happen later in the text. This is known as **foreshadowing**.

For example, in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the appearance of rats in the central character's apartment creates a feeling of unease about the future and even hints at events later in the novel when rats are used to torture him. In Frank Darabont's film *The Shawshank Redemption*, the evil prison warden crushes a cigarette beneath his foot a moment before he has a prisoner shot. Again, in TS Eliot's poem 'Journey of the Magi', when the three wise men are on their way to see the newborn Jesus, they see 'three trees on the low sky', which foreshadows Jesus' death on the cross between two criminals.

Read Act 2 Scene 6, lines 6–8. This is one of the first examples of foreshadowing of the tragic ending to *Romeo and Juliet*.

- Q What does Romeo mean by what he says in lines 6–8?
- Q What words or phrases seem unusual or out of place for a wedding?
- Q What do you imagine Shakespeare might be hinting will occur later in the play?
- Q Try to think of some other examples of foreshadowing that are evident in the play so far.

Act 3

Act 3 Scene 1

CHARACTERS

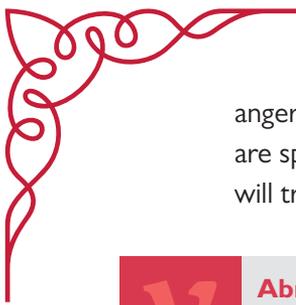
Mercutio
Benvolio
Romeo
Tybalt
Prince
Lady Capulet
Lord Montague
First Citizen
Page and Servants
[non-speaking roles]
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

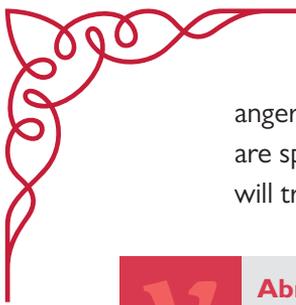
Benvolio tries to persuade Mercutio to return home as the Capulets are nearby and he fears a brawl. Mercutio responds by joking that Benvolio enjoys brawling. When Tybalt arrives, looking for Romeo, Mercutio insults him and they are about to fight when Romeo enters. Romeo refuses to fight Tybalt, and Mercutio, amazed and disgusted at Romeo's behaviour, fights Tybalt instead. When Romeo tries to hold him back, Mercutio is injured and he dies quickly from the wound. In fury, Romeo kills Tybalt and flees for his life. The Prince arrives and, despite Lady Capulet's call for Romeo to be put to death, banishes Romeo from Verona.

Before you read

- If you are playing the part of Mercutio, make sure you practise lines 13–24 in particular. These lines are a great example of Mercutio's love of language. There are many puns as he plays around with the sound and meanings of words. Like tongue twisters, the lines are fast paced and quite difficult, but they are also amusing.
- Mercutio deliberately winds Tybalt up and also seems keen to fight him. He appears to be genuinely angered by Tybalt's comments and is also disgusted by Romeo's 'vile submission' or refusal to fight.
- If you read the part of Romeo, make sure you emphasise his sudden change in mood from love and excitement (at just being married to Juliet) to furious rage.
- After Mercutio is stabbed, his speech becomes erratic. If you are playing the part of Mercutio, you will need to think about how you would perform his lines (especially lines 79–81, 86–92 and 94–97). You might shout some lines in



anger, addressing everyone; other lines might be muttered to yourself; others are spoken directly to Romeo. It is likely that your final line ('your houses ...') will trail off into silence.



V

Abroad:	Around the place
Villain:	A wicked person, rascal or rogue: used as a harsh insult
Appertaining:	Proper or appropriate; Romeo is suggesting that he has every right to be angry
Slander:	False accusation
Valour:	Bravery
Exile:	Being banished (thrown or locked out) from a place

A public place.

[MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, Page and Servants enter]

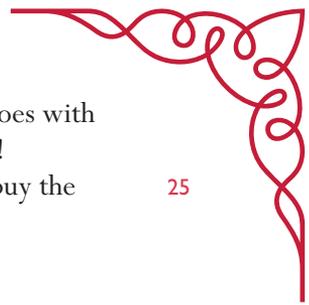
BENVOLIO	I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire: The day is hot, the Capulets abroad, And, if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl; For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.	
MERCUTIO	Thou art like one of those fellows that, when he enters the confines of a tavern, claps me his sword upon the table and says, 'God send me no need of thee!' And by the operation of the second cup, draws it on the drawer, when indeed there is no need.	5
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.	10
BENVOLIO	And what to?	
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. 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 quarrelling. Thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new	15 20



7 **The operation of the second cup:** Once he is under the influence of the second cup of wine.

8 **Drawer:** Bartender.

19 **Addle:** Rotten.



doublet before Easter? With another for tying his new shoes with old ribbon? And yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling!

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. 25

MERCUTIO The fee-simple! O simple!

BENVOLIO By my head, here come the Capulets.

MERCUTIO By my heel, I care not.

[TYBALT and others enter]

TYBALT Follow me close, for I will speak to them – 30
Gentlemen, good den. A word with one of you.

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? 35

TYBALT Mercutio, thou consort'st 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!

BENVOLIO We talk here in the public haunt of men: 40
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:
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I. 45

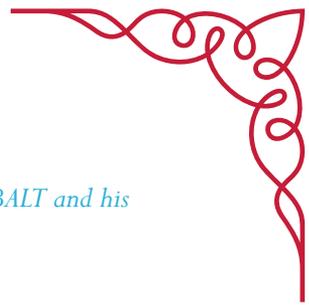
[ROMEO enters]

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'.



-
- 23 **Doublet:** Jacket.
 - 25–26 **An I were so apt ... an hour and a quarter:** Benvolio says that if he were really as prone to quarrelling as Mercutio claims, he would be dead within an hour and a quarter ('fee-simple' = full title or permanent lease).
 - 34 **You shall find me ... give me occasion:** You will find me ready ('apt') for that if you give me the opportunity.
 - 37–39 **Consort ... make you dance:** How dare you insult me by suggesting that I'm an entertainer (or even a clown); but if you are going to make this sort of comparison, then my sword will make you dance (this is an extended metaphor or conceit).
 - 39 **Zounds:** Short for 'By His [Christ's] wounds' (a swear word or blasphemy in Elizabethan times).
 - 47–49 **But I'll be hanged ... may call him 'man':** Throughout the play Romeo refers to his servant as his 'man'. Mercutio says he will be extremely surprised if Romeo wore the uniform of Tybalt's servants ('livery'). Mercutio also asserts that, if Romeo were Tybalt's follower, it would only be to follow him into the fields for a duel.



Forbidden bandying in Verona streets.
Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

[ROMEO holds MERCUTIO, who is stabbed by TYBALT under ROMEO's arm; TYBALT and his followers flee the scene]

MERCUTIO I am hurt.
A plague on both your houses! I am sped. 80
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.

[Page exits]

ROMEO Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much. 85
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 on
both your houses! – Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch
a man to death! A braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book 90
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 on both your houses! 95
They have made worms' meat of me. I have it,
And soundly too ... your houses ...

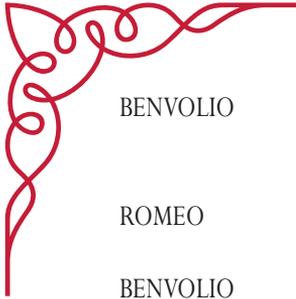
[MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO exit]

ROMEO This gentleman, the Prince's near ally,
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt
In my behalf; my reputation stained 100
With Tybalt's slander: Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my cousin! – O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
And in my temper softened valour's steel!

[BENVOLIO re-enters]



-
- 77 **Bandyng:** Fighting.
 - 88 **Peppered:** Killed.
 - 90 **Braggart:** Someone who brags or is big-headed.
 - 90–91 **Fights by the book of arithmetic:** He fights by the rule book or very precisely (by timing and counting his strokes).
 - 98 **The Prince's near ally:** Mercutio is the Prince's relation.
 - 99 **Mortal hurt:** A wound that will kill him.
 - 103 **Effeminate:** Womanly, which here means being emotional or acting out of love.



BENVOLIO O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead! 105
That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

ROMEO This day's black fate on more days doth depend;
This but begins the woe, others must end.

BENVOLIO Here comes the furious Tybalt back again. 110

ROMEO Alive, in triumph! And Mercutio slain!
Away to heaven, respective lenity,
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!

[TYBALT re-enters]

Now, Tybalt, take the 'villain' back again,
That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul 115
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.

TYBALT Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,
Shalt with him hence.

ROMEO This shall determine that. 120

[ROMEO and TYBALT fight; TYBALT is killed]

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!

ROMEO O, I am fortune's fool!

BENVOLIO Why dost thou stay? 125

[ROMEO runs off, as the PRINCE and his Attendants, MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their Wives and Citizens enter]

1ST CITIZEN Which way ran he that killed Mercutio?
Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

BENVOLIO There lies that Tybalt.

1ST CITIZEN Up, sir, go with me;
I charge thee in the Prince's name, obey.

PRINCE Where are the vile beginners of this fray? 130

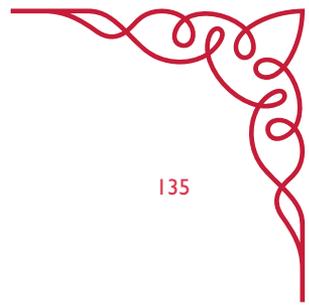
BENVOLIO O noble Prince, I can discover all
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl:

106–07 **That gallant spirit ... did scorn the earth:** Benvolio makes his affection for Mercutio clear, describing him in heroic terms but also conceding that his final speeches were unbecoming for someone on the verge of death.

112 **Respective lenity:** Respectful mildness.

113 **And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now:** Romeo is asking fury (hot anger) to guide his actions, giving himself over to this base emotion.





There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

LADY CAPULET Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child! – 135
O Prince! – O husband! O, the blood is spilt
Of my dear kinsman! – Prince, as thou art true,
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.
O cousin, cousin!

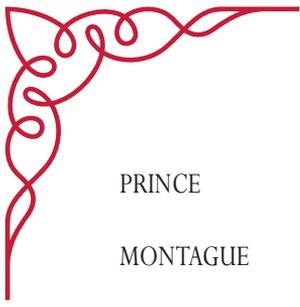
PRINCE Benvolio, who began this bloody fray? 140

BENVOLIO Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.
Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal
Your high displeasure. All this utterèd
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed, 145
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 150
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, 155
And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled;
But by and by comes back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertained revenge, 160
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; 165
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.



- 142–43 **Bade him bethink / How nice the quarrel was:** Romeo attempted to convince Tybalt that the quarrel was trivial ('nice').
- 146 **Unruly spleen:** Uncontrolled temper. The spleen is often associated with anger or bitterness (as in venting your spleen).
- 150 **Martial scorn:** Warlike insult.
- 153 **Retorts:** Returns.
- 166 **Affection makes him false:** His love for Romeo makes him untrustworthy.



I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must give:
Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live. 170

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.

PRINCE
And for that offence 175
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. 180
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's found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence this body and attend our will: 185
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.

[All exit]

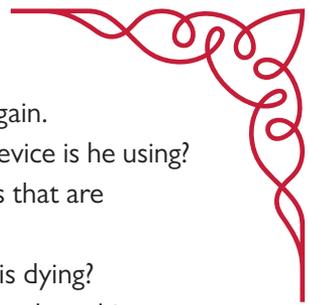


- 177–80 **I have an interest ... repent the loss of mine:** The Prince reminds everyone of his personal interest in the brawl (being related to Mercutio). The Prince looks to make the consequences severe so that those involved in the brawl repent their actions, and therefore regret the death of Mercutio.
- 182 **Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses:** Crying or praying will not be able to buy forgiveness.
- 186 **Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill:** The Prince points out that more murders might occur if he is too merciful.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is Benvolio worried at the beginning of the scene? Do you think he has reason to be?
- 2 What does Mercutio say about Benvolio? Are these comments fair or accurate? Can you find evidence from earlier in the play that contradicts what he says?
- 3 Why is Tybalt looking for Romeo?
- 4 When Romeo first arrives, what do we, as an audience, know that the other characters do not? Explain what literary technique Shakespeare uses here.
- 5 Why is Romeo unwilling to fight Tybalt? Why doesn't he tell everyone that he has just married Juliet?



- 6 Read the passage relating to Mercutio's death (lines 79–97) again.
 - a How does Mercutio describe his wound? What literary device is he using?
 - b List some words or phrases from Mercutio's dying words that are comical (or funny) and sad (or emotive).
 - c Can you find and explain a pun that Mercutio uses as he is dying?
 - d What does Mercutio's use of punning as he is dying tell us about his character?
 - e What do you think is the saddest or most emotive word or phrase used by Mercutio? Why?
 - f Do you think Mercutio's joking and punning adds to the pathos (sadness) of his death or does it detract (take away) from its impact?
- 7 How do the following characters describe Tybalt in this scene? Use a table such as the one below to record your answers.

Character	Description of Tybalt
Benvolio (lines 146–47, 152)	
Mercutio (lines 65–70, 90–91)	
1 ST Citizen (line 127)	
How do their descriptions add to your understanding of Tybalt's character? (Write two or three sentences.)	



- 1 Romeo's character changes because of Mercutio's death. How does Shakespeare show this change through the language Romeo uses (for an example, see line 113)?
- 2 Remember that one of the play's major themes is that personal weaknesses (base emotions or fatal flaws) tend to spread to other characters (see page 77).
 - a What personal weakness seems to be spreading here?
 - b Do you think that Romeo's hiding the fact of his marriage to Juliet has led to any misunderstanding in this scene?
 - c With this in mind, what do you think might happen next?
- 3 Mercutio repeatedly calls out, 'A plague on both your houses!' Why do you think Shakespeare uses the image of a plague in these lines? See the History Box on page 176 for some ideas.

- 4 Copy the following table into your workbook, then complete it to show your understanding of whom, or what, the various characters blame for Mercutio's death.

Character	Who or what is to blame for Mercutio's death?
Romeo (line 108)	
	luck
Romeo (line 125)	
Mercutio (lines 80; 88–89)	



DISCUSS

- 1 What punishment does the Prince give to Romeo?
- 2 Do you think the punishment is fair given Romeo's actions? Why / why not?
- 3 Do you think the Prince has handled the situation well? Why / why not?

Baz Luhrmann: DVD ('Death of Mercutio')



PRESS PLAY

Look at how Luhrmann presents Mercutio's death and then discuss the following aspects in groups and as a class.

- 1 How effectively does he capture the humour and pathos of the scene?
- 2 What cinematic devices does he use to make this scene powerful and emotive (moving)?
- 3 Discuss the choices of lighting, soundtrack and camera work you would use if you were given the role of directing a film version of lines 50–97 of this scene.



... brave Mercutio's dead!

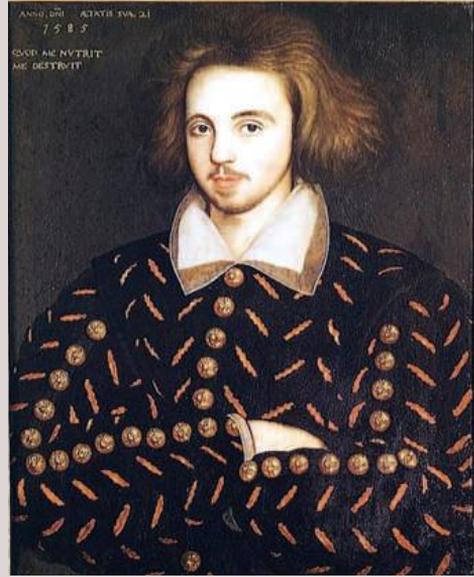
Was Mercutio's character based on someone Shakespeare knew?

Shakespeare might have based Mercutio on the playwright Christopher Marlowe, who had a reputation for upsetting people with insulting behaviour, controversial views and brawling or fighting. He was also a government spy.

Marlowe was killed in 1593, just one year before *Romeo and Juliet* was first performed, in very suspicious circumstances. According to official records, he was

drinking with friends when an argument broke out over the bill. Marlowe died from a knife wound above his left eye but no-one was charged with his murder. The strange details of his death have led many people to believe he was assassinated by the government agency for which he was working.

Marlowe was only 29 when he died and at that time was perhaps a more accomplished playwright than Shakespeare. Recent conspiracy theorists have even suggested that he faked his own death so that he could continue writing, and that he gave his plays to Shakespeare, who passed them off as his own. There is very little evidence to support this theory.



Portrait dated 1585, widely thought to be of Christopher Marlowe

Act 3 Scene 2

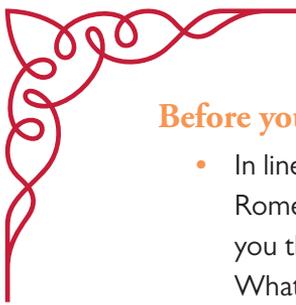
CHARACTERS

Juliet
Nurse



IN A NUTSHELL

Now married, Juliet waits impatiently for Romeo to come to her. The Nurse enters, overwhelmed by grief, and leads Juliet to believe that Romeo is dead. Eventually the Nurse explains that Romeo has killed Tybalt, and that, as a result, he has been banished from Verona. Juliet is grief-stricken and horrified; her Nurse, who knows Romeo's whereabouts, promises to deliver him a ring from Juliet, and guarantees Romeo will visit Juliet that night.



Before you read

- In lines 1–35 Juliet is excited, as this will be the first night she spends with Romeo. Read through the lines that open the scene and discuss together how you think it might be performed. What might Juliet be doing as she is speaking? What about her facial expressions? How might she be speaking? Will it be softly? Loudly? Slowly? Quickly?
- Juliet’s opening lines that urge the speedy arrival of sunset allude to classical mythology. She initially refers to the horse-drawn chariot of the sun god Phoebus (Apollo). Phaeton was given permission to drive his father’s chariot one day but could not control the horses. Because Phaeton rode too close to the Earth, Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt to prevent the world from being consumed by fire. This allusion subtly highlights the passionate and transitory (short-lived) nature of Romeo and Juliet’s love.
- This is a particularly emotional scene. At first, Juliet is excited and impatient for Romeo to arrive, as it is their wedding night. The mood must change instantly when the Nurse arrives and Juliet is overwhelmed by the bad news.

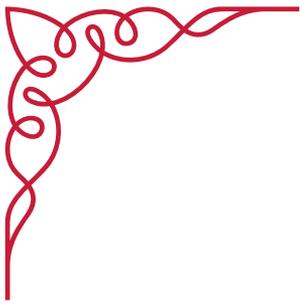


Amorous:	Loving
Maidenhead:	Virginity
Piteous:	Perhaps tender or more likely something that produces pity or sadness
Bedaubed:	Covered or plastered
Swounded:	Swooned or fainted
Hark ye:	You listen (to me)

A word about soliloquy

You are probably familiar with television soap operas, with their rather predictable plots and abundance of cosmetic surgery. You might have noticed that the characters on these sorts of shows sometimes speak their thoughts aloud to themselves when nobody else is around! Actually, this is not as strange as it sounds – Shakespeare had his characters doing this hundreds of years ago and it is known as **soliloquy** (*so-ll-lo-kwee*).

A soliloquy involves a character talking when he or she is alone. Shakespeare uses this device to help the audience understand the mind of the character who is speaking and their motives for what they are doing or plan to do. We talk to ourselves all the time (try thinking without language) and soliloquies reflect this.



Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-browed night, 20
 Give me my Romeo; and, when I shall die,
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine
 That all the world will be in love with night
 And pay no worship to the garish sun. 25
 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
 To an impatient child that hath new robes 30
 And may not wear them – O, here comes my Nurse,
 And she brings news; and every tongue that speaks
 But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.

[NURSE enters, carrying cords]

Now, Nurse, what news? What hast thou there? The cords
 That Romeo bid thee fetch?

NURSE Ay, ay, the cords. 35

[NURSE throws the cords down]

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!

JULIET Can heaven be so envious?

NURSE Romeo can, 40

Though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo!
 Whoever would have thought it? Romeo!

JULIET What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?

This torture should be roared in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but 'ay' 45

And that bare vowel 'ay' shall poison more
 Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice.

I am not I, if there be such an 'ay';

Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer 'ay'.

If he be slain, say 'ay'; or if not, 'no'. 50

Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe.



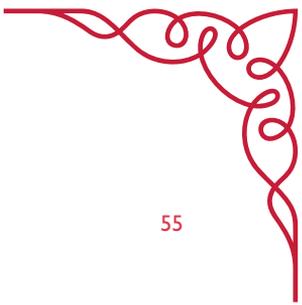
25 **Garish:** Annoyingly bright.

28 **Tedious:** Slow.

33 **Eloquence:** Words of beauty and skill.

47 **Cockatrice:** A creature, half-snake and half-man, whose glance could kill.

51 **Weal:** Happiness (opposite of 'woe').



NURSE I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes –
 God save the mark! – here on his manly breast.
 A piteous corpse, a bloody piteous corpse;
 Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood,
 All in gore-blood; I swoounded at the sight. 55

JULIET O, break, my heart! Poor bankrupt, break at once!
 To prison, eyes, ne'er look on liberty!
 Vile earth, to earth resign; end motion here;
 And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier! 60

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?
 Is Romeo slaughtered, and is Tybalt dead?
 My dearest 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 banishèd;
 Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd. 70

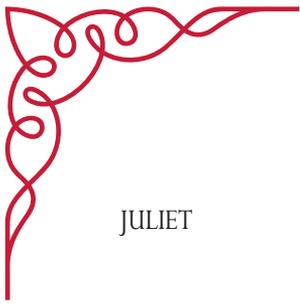
JULIET O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?
 NURSE It did, it did; alas the day, it did!

JULIET O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!
 Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
 Beautiful tyrant! Fiend angelical! 75
 Dove-feathered raven! Wolvish-ravening lamb!
 Despisèd substance of divinest show!
 Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st:
 A damnèd saint, an honourable villain!
 O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell, 80
 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
 In such a gorgeous palace!

NURSE There's no trust,
 No faith, no honesty in men; all perjured,
 All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers. 85



- 59 **Vile earth:** Juliet addresses her own body.
 60 **Press one heavy bier:** Juliet wishes to be buried in the same coffin as Romeo.
 81 **Bower:** Enclose.
 86 **Perjured:** Corrupt or liars.
 87 **Dissemblers:** Deceivers.



Ah, where's my man? Give me some aqua vitae;
 These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
 Shame come to Romeo!

JULIET

Blistered be thy tongue

90

For such a wish! He was not born to shame;
 Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
 For 'tis a throne where honour may be crowned
 Sole monarch of the universal earth.

O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

95

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?

But, wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?

100

That villain cousin would have killed my husband.

Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;

Your tributary drops belong to woe,

Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.

My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;

105

And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband:

All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?

Some word there was, worsè than Tybalt's death,

That murdered me: I would forget it fain;

But, O, it presses to my memory,

110

Like damnèd guilty deeds to sinners' minds:

'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo: banished;'

That 'banishèd', that one word 'banishèd',

Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death

Was woe enough, if it had ended there;

115

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,

Which modern lamentations might have moved?

120

But with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,

'Romeo is banished'; to speak that word,

Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,



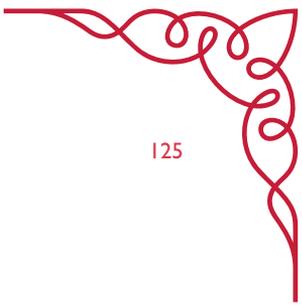
88 **Aqua vitae:** Brandy (a literal translation would be 'water of life').

103 **Tributary:** Tears that pay tribute (or respect); a play on the words 'native spring' in the previous line.

109 **Fain:** Gladly.

120 **Modern lamentations:** Ordinary sorrows.

121 **Rear-ward:** Following right behind, the very next thing that happens.



All slain, all dead. ‘Romeo is banishèd!’
 There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
 In that word’s death; no words can that woe sound. 125

NURSE Weeping and wailing over Tybalt’s corpse.
 Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

JULIET Wash they his wounds with tears; mine shall be spent, 130
 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,
 But I, a maid, die maiden-widowèd. 135

NURSE Come, cords; come, Nurse: I’ll to my wedding-bed;
 And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!
 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’s cell.

JULIET O, find him! Give this ring to my true knight,
 And bid him come to take his last farewell.

[Both exit]



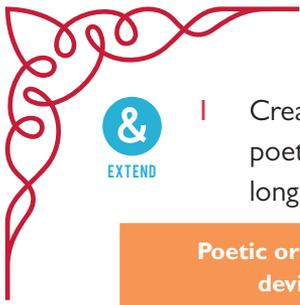
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- 132 **Beguiled:** Deceived.
 135 **A maid, die maiden-widowèd:** Juliet reflects that she will die a virgin despite being a widow. This is a paradox, in which two seemingly opposite statements are both true.
 139 **Wot:** Know.



QUESTIONS

- 1 List three literary techniques (e.g. repetition of words and phrases) that Shakespeare uses to show how upset the Nurse is. For each technique include an example or quotation from the text.
- 2 What does the audience know that Juliet doesn’t at the beginning of this scene? How does this (**dramatic irony**) create tension or drama in the play?





1 Create a table similar to the one below for your notes to show how the poetic or literary devices that Juliet uses in her opening speech indicate her longing for Romeo.

Poetic or literary device	Examples (quotations)	How this shows Juliet's longing for Romeo
Images of speed		
Repeated words		
Images of impatience		

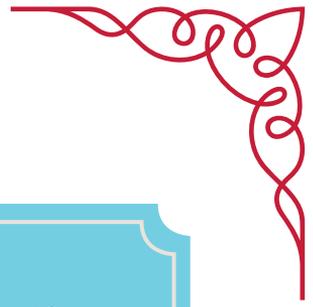
- 2 Discuss how Juliet's use of **antithesis** (opposing ideas) in lines 17–19 adds to your understanding of her love for Romeo. In your response consider the objects she is contrasting to Romeo.
- 3 Explain what you think Juliet means when she asks, 'Can heaven be so envious?' (line 40). How is this an example of **personification**?
- 4 Create a table similar to the one below for your notes to show how Juliet feels when she finds out that Romeo has been banished for killing Tybalt.

Literary device	Examples or quotations from the text
Oxymoron , showing Juliet's confusion and grief	
Continual asking of questions , revealing her confusion	
Repetition of words, conveying that Juliet is distraught	
Hyperbole (deliberate and extreme exaggeration) to convey her intense emotional pain	



Some critics believe that the Nurse is genuine in her sorrow in this scene, while others argue that she is being melodramatic or over-the-top. What do you think? Give some evidence to support your answer.

Act 3 Scene 3



CHARACTERS

Romeo
Friar Laurence
Nurse



IN A NUTSHELL

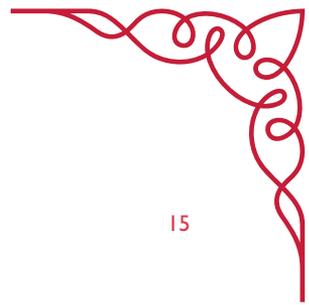
Romeo, overcome by grief at being banished from Juliet's presence, hides in Friar Laurence's cell. Here he argues with the Friar about how unfortunate his circumstances are. When the Nurse arrives, she tells them of Juliet's similar grief. Finally, the Friar gives Romeo reason to hope and sends him away to comfort Juliet.

Before you read

- In this scene, it is Romeo's turn to be overcome by grief. Note how many times he repeats the word 'banished!' Also be careful how you pronounce the word: sometimes it has two syllables ('ban-ish-ed') and at other times an accent above the e tells us it has three syllables ('ban-ish-èd'). This helps Shakespeare to keep the rhythm (**iambic pentameter**) regular and adds emphasis to the word.
- Friar Laurence is infuriated with Romeo's ingratitude and whining, and this should be expressed in the way lines 107 onwards are delivered. The Friar accuses Romeo of being 'womanish', or acting like a woman, many times in this scene. This is done as an attempt to shame Romeo into pulling himself together.



Affliction:	Trouble or suffering
Enamoured:	Delighted by or, in this case, attracted to someone
Doomsday:	The end of the world
Calamity:	Disaster or misfortune
Philosophy:	Wisdom or advice
Sullen wench:	Stubborn woman



ROMEO Ha, banishment! Be merciful, say 'death';
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death. Do not say 'banishment'.

FRIAR LAURENCE Hence from Verona art thou banishèd: 15
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

ROMEO There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence, 'banishèd' is banished from the world,
And world's exile is death. Then 'banishèd' 20
Is death mis-termed: calling death banishèd,
Thou cutt'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

FRIAR LAURENCE O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death, but the kind Prince, 25
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.

ROMEO 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here, 30
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 honourable 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.
But Romeo may not; he is banishèd. 40
Flies may do this, but I from this must fly;
They are free men, but I am banishèd.
And say'st thou yet that exile is not death?
Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean, 45
But 'banishèd' to kill me? 'Banishèd'?
O Friar, the damnèd use that word in hell;



-
- 18 **Purgatory:** Where people are believed to suffer for their sins after death (a waiting place between earth and heaven).
 - 24 **Deadly sin:** Ingratitude.
 - 33 **Validity:** Value.
 - 35 **Carrion-flies:** Flies that feed on corpses.
 - 38 **Vestal modesty:** Chaste innocence, or moral purity.



Howlings attend it. How hast thou the heart,
 Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
 A sin-absolver, and my friend professed, 50
 To mangle me with that word ‘banished’?

FRIAR LAURENCE Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.

ROMEO O, thou wilt speak again of banishment!

FRIAR LAURENCE I’ll give thee armour to keep off that word:
 Adversity’s sweet milk, philosophy, 55
 To comfort thee, though thou art banishèd.

ROMEO Yet ‘banished’? Hang up philosophy!
 Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
 Displant a town, reverse a Prince’s doom,
 It helps not, it prevails not. Talk no more. 60

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:
 Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love, 65
 An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,
 Doting like me and like me banishèd,
 Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,
 And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
 Taking the measure of an unmade grave. 70

[Knocking]

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.

[Knocking]

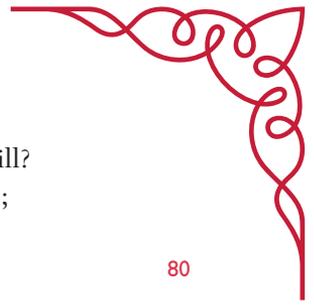
FRIAR LAURENCE Hark, how they knock! – Who’s there? – Romeo, arise;
 Thou wilt be taken – Stay awhile! – Stand up! 75

[Knocking]

Run to my study – By and by! – God’s will,
 What simpleness is this! – I come, I come!



-
- 48 **Howlings:** The sound of howling.
 - 50 **Sin-absolver:** Someone who has the power to forgive sins.
 - 55 **Adversity:** Trouble.
 - 59 **Displant a town:** Move a town, like tearing a plant up by the roots; in this case, to move Verona to Mantua.
 - 63 **Thy estate:** Your situation.
 - 67 **Doting like me:** In love or infatuated like I am.
 - 70 **Taking the measure of an unmade grave:** When Romeo lies on the ground, he will be equivalent to the length of a grave.



[Knocking]

NURSE Who knocks so hard? Whence come you? What's your will?
[Within] Let me come in, and you shall know my errand;
I come from Lady Juliet.

FRIAR LAURENCE Welcome, then.

80

[NURSE enters]

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,
Just in her case! O woeful sympathy!
Piteous predicament! Even so lies she,
Blubbering 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;
Why should you fall into so deep an O?

85

90

ROMEO Nurse!

NURSE Ah sir! Ah sir! Well, Death's the end of all.

ROMEO Spakest thou of Juliet? How is it with her?
Doth she not think me an old murderer,
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 cancelled love?

95

NURSE O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps;
And now falls on her bed; and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls; and then on Romeo cries;
And then down falls again.

100

ROMEO As if that name,
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her, as that name's cursèd hand
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.

105

[ROMEO draws his sword, threatening to kill himself]

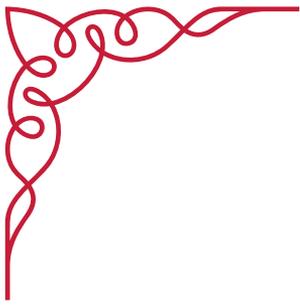
FRIAR LAURENCE Hold thy desperate hand.
Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art;



90 **So deep an O:** Such an exclamation of sorrow. The 'O' refers to Romeo's groaning.

105 **Anatomy:** Body.

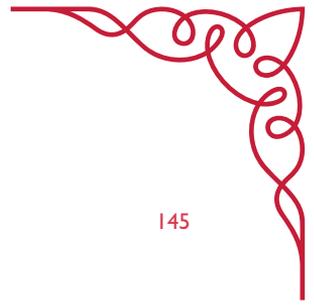
106 **Sack:** Ransack or destroy.



Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote
 The unreasonable fury of a beast: 110
 Unseemly woman in a seeming man!
 Or ill-beseeming beast in seeming both!
 Thou hast amazed me; by my holy order,
 I thought thy disposition better tempered.
 Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself? 115
 And slay thy lady too that lives in thee,
 By doing damnèd hate upon thyself?
 Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?
 Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
 In thee at once, which thou at once wouldst lose. 120
 Fie, fie, thou shamest thy shape, thy love, thy wit,
 Which, like a usurer, abound'st in all,
 And usest none in that true use indeed
 Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
 Thy noble shape is but a form of wax, 125
 Digressing from the valour of a man;
 Thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,
 Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish;
 Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
 Misshapen in the conduct of them both, 130
 Like powder in a skitless soldier's flask,
 Is set afire by thine own ignorance,
 And thou dismembered with thine own defence.
 What, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive,
 For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead: 135
 There art thou happy; Tybalt would kill thee,
 But thou slew'st Tybalt: there art thou happy too;
 The law that threatened death becomes thy friend
 And turns it to exile: there art thou happy.
 A pack of blessings lights up upon thy back; 140
 Happiness courts thee in her best array;



- 112 **Ill-beseeming:** Unbecoming; inappropriate. According to Friar Laurence, Romeo is acting like a woman or an animal, not a man.
- 114 **I thought thy disposition better tempered:** I thought your manner was more composed.
- 118 **Why rail'st:** Why curse?
- 121–30 **Fie, fie, thou shamest ... conduct of them both:** The Friar is disgusted at how Romeo uses his intelligence. He suggests that suicide is cowardly and inconsistent with Romeo's marriage vows. The Friar attempts to be persuasive by challenging Romeo's manhood ('thy wit' = your intelligence; 'usurer' = moneylender; 'bedeck' = decorate; 'a form of wax' = easily moulded, 'digressing from' = turning from; 'misshapen' = misdirected).
- 131–33 **Like powder ... with thine own defence:** The Friar compares Romeo's intelligence to a clumsy, untrained soldier who sets alight the gunpowder he carries and blows himself up as he tries to defend himself ('powder' = gunpowder; 'flask' = container).



But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,
 Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love:
 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.
 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
 Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.
 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.

145

NURSE O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night
 To hear good counsel. O, what learning is!
 Well, sir, I'll tell my lady you will come.
 ROMEO Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.
 NURSE Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir:
 Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

150

155

160

[NURSE exits]

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,
 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. Farewell.

165

170

[Both exit]

-
- 142 **Wench:** Woman.
 143 **Pout'st:** Frown.
 147 **But look thou stay not till the Watch be set:** The Friar advises Romeo not to stay so late that the night-watchman is already on duty at the city gates.
 150 **Blaze your marriage:** Proclaim the marriage publicly.
 168 **Sojourn in Mantua:** Stay temporarily in Mantua.
 169–70 **And he shall signify ... chances here:** He will occasionally come and let you know what is happening in Verona.



?
QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do you think Romeo repeats the word 'banished' so many times in this scene? Why would he rather be dead than banished?
- 2 Friar Laurence criticises Romeo for being unthankful. For what things does Friar Laurence say Romeo should be thankful?
- 3 While Friar Laurence and Romeo are talking, there is a continual knocking at the door. How does this knocking help to build the dramatic tension of this scene?

&
EXTEND

- 1 Note that the Nurse says Romeo is just like Juliet, that 'he is even in my mistress' case / Just in her case' (lines 84–85). Shakespeare uses numerous examples of **mirroring** to show that Romeo (in this scene) is behaving similarly to Juliet (in the previous scene).
 - a What word does Romeo continually **repeat**, the same word that Juliet repeated often in the previous scene? What is the significance of this word for the lovers?
 - b How does Romeo's use of **hyperbole** mirror Juliet's use of the same device (e.g. see lines 17–23)?
 - c How does the word order (syntax) of lines 1 and 87 show a type of mirroring?
 - d What do you think Shakespeare wishes to show about the characters of Romeo and Juliet by using this technique of mirroring?
- 2 Notice Shakespeare's use of **antithesis** in this scene when both the Friar and the Nurse challenge Romeo's manhood.
 - a With what two things is Romeo's manhood contrasted (include quotes)?
 - b What do you think Shakespeare is demonstrating about Romeo's character by using these opposing ideas?
- 3 This scene ends positively. How does Shakespeare use the following word choices and literary devices to create a positive ending? Create a table similar to the one below for your notes.

Device	Examples	How the device helps to create a positive ending for the scene
Positive words	'blessings', 'happiness', 'sweet', 'joy', 'comfort'	
Hyperbole (use of exaggeration)		
Contrast in tone or feeling to the beginning of the scene		This scene begins ... but ends ...



DISCUSS

If you were to direct this scene, what theatrical devices would you use to support Shakespeare's use of language to highlight the intensity of Romeo's emotional pain? You might consider aspects such as lighting and soundtrack, as well as the actors' voice, actions and facial expressions.



Banishment! Be merciful, say 'death' ...

Banishment and other punishments



Illustration by George Cruikshank (1792–1878) of Guy Fawkes' execution in 1606

Banishment was a serious and common punishment in ancient Greece, Renaissance Italy and Medieval England. You may not be particularly fond of the suburb or town in which you live but, for Romeo, banishment means being cut off from his family and everything he knows.

Romeo is perhaps fortunate to escape with this punishment, as executions were commonplace in Italy at that time. In Shakespeare's England, there were three main forms of execution: hanging, beheading (with an axe or sword) and burning at the stake. These executions were popular public spectacles and attracted large crowds.

The worst punishment of all (being hung, drawn and quartered) was reserved for those

who committed treason (betrayed their country or ruler). This punishment ended with the victim being cut into four pieces – quartered – which were then displayed around the city to deter others from committing similar crimes.

Although there were 18 prisons in London, most were holding places for criminals prior to a court appearance, and long sentences were unusual. Punishments for lesser crimes included whipping and amputation. The most minor crimes were punished largely through public humiliation and embarrassment. The ducking stool, invented in 1597, was a device used to dunk into water women guilty of gossiping. Drunkards were sometimes forced to squat in a specially designed barrel called a drunkard's cloak, and the public was encouraged to jeer at or insult them.



Act 3 Scene 4

CHARACTERS

Capulet
Paris
Lady Capulet



IN A NUTSHELL

Paris comes to the Capulet house to woo Juliet, but he is told that she is mourning and has gone to bed early. Before Paris leaves, Capulet promises Paris that he can marry Juliet on Thursday, in just three days.

Before you read

- Keep in mind that Capulet, as leader of the household, is a powerful and proud man who is very sure of himself. He also tends to think aloud and can be a little scatty or forgetful.
- When Capulet first decides his daughter and Paris will marry that week, he boasts, 'I think she will be ruled / In all respects by me; nay, more, I doubt it not' (lines 13–14). It is clear that Capulet expects his daughter to be extremely obedient, and this in part explains his anger and absolute insistence that Juliet marry Paris. After his assertions in this scene, his pride and credibility are at stake.



Woo: Try to win the heart of someone; to win someone over
Mewed: Locked up or confined
Revel: Celebrate

A room in Capulet's house.

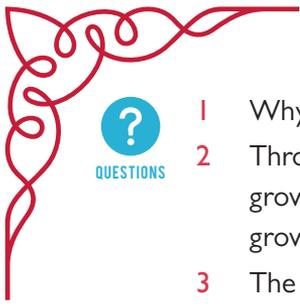
[CAPULET, LADY CAPULET and PARIS enter]

CAPULET Things have fallen 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.
'Tis very late, she'll not come down tonight;
I promise you, but for your company,
I would have been a-bed an hour ago.

5



1–2 **Things have fallen ... to move our daughter:** Events have happened in such a way that we have had no time to persuade our daughter to marry.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do you think Capulet only wants a small wedding?
- 2 Throughout this scene, as we hear Capulet speaking, the size of the wedding grows from ‘a friend or two’ to ‘some half a dozen friends’. In later scenes, it grows even further. What might this tell us about Capulet’s character?
- 3 The **narrative structure** of the play is the shape and direction of the plot or story. Create a table similar to the one below for your notes to show your understanding of the narrative structure of *Romeo and Juliet* to this point in time.

Question	Answer
What are Capulet and Paris planning for Juliet?	
What has Juliet already done?	
What complication does this create?	
What do you think Juliet might do? Try to think of two or three possibilities.	
Choose one of your responses from the previous answer and describe how you think Capulet might respond.	



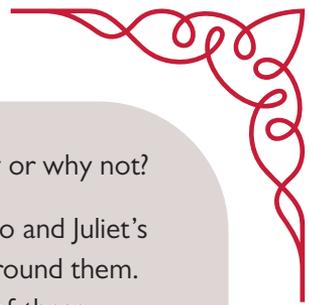
EXTEND

- The audience knows more than Capulet about what has recently happened.
- a Why does Capulet assume Juliet is grieving?
 - b Of what additional reason for her grief is the audience aware?
 - c How does the audience’s greater knowledge of Juliet’s situation add dramatic tension to the scene, especially when Capulet promises Juliet to Paris?

Thinking about love

Mention the names Romeo and Juliet and most people would probably think of teenagers in love, or perhaps the notion of love at first sight.

Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift used the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* as inspiration for her 2008 song ‘Love Story’, in which she sings: ‘This love is difficult, but it’s real’. In Act 3 Scene 5, Romeo and Juliet have to overcome many obstacles to be together but finally wake, newly married, from their first night together. The lovers’ passion is intensified by the fact that they must now be separated because of Romeo’s banishment from Verona.



Q In your opinion, is Romeo and Juliet’s love for each other ‘real’? Why or why not?

Up to this point in the play, and certainly beyond, we can see that Romeo and Juliet’s love **contrasts** greatly to numerous **competing** ideas of love that surround them. Copy and complete the following diagram to show your understanding of these **oppositions** or **antitheses**. Include some brief quotations (with line numbers) as evidence.

<p style="text-align: center;">Romeo’s love for Rosaline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow and constantly changing <i>EVIDENCE =</i> 		<p style="text-align: center;">Mercutio’s idea of love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is only associated with sex <i>EVIDENCE =</i> • Mocks Romeo’s idea of love <i>EVIDENCE =</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Friar Laurence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warns Romeo and Juliet against extremes <i>EVIDENCE =</i> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Romeo and Juliet’s love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love at first sight: <i>EVIDENCE =</i> • Greater than anything previously experienced: <i>EVIDENCE =</i> • Rushed and impatient: <i>EVIDENCE =</i> • Binding and real: <i>EVIDENCE =</i> • Passionate: <i>EVIDENCE =</i> • Expressed in beautiful poetry, with religious images and images of light: <i>EVIDENCE =</i> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Romeo and Juliet’s parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are no experts on love, as the two families are full of hatred <i>EVIDENCE =</i> • Favour arranged marriages <i>EVIDENCE =</i> 		

As you read the remainder of the play, remember that Friar Laurence is right when he says that ‘violent delights have violent ends’: we know that Romeo and Juliet will die.

BUT ... you might also ask: Is it Romeo and Juliet’s love for each other that leads to their death? Or is it their parents’ hatred (the ‘ancient grudge’) that makes their death unavoidable? Little wonder Romeo was confused about ‘brawling love’ and ‘loving hate’ in Act I Scene I (line 162).



Act 3 Scene 5

CHARACTERS

Juliet
Romeo
Capulet
Lady Capulet
Nurse
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

Romeo has just spent the night with his wife, Juliet, and now reluctantly bids farewell to her as he has been banished from the city of Verona. Juliet is informed by her parents that her wedding to Paris will take place in three days' time, and she strongly protests. A heated argument follows and Capulet threatens to disown Juliet. When her Nurse recommends that she marry Paris, Juliet outwardly consents and asks permission to go to confession, where she plans to seek the Friar's advice.

Before you read

- The first part of this scene is particularly tender and playful, with neither Romeo nor Juliet wishing to be the first to say goodbye. The couple debates whether the bird they hear is a nightingale (a bird of the night) or a lark (a bird of early morning). Note how Juliet tries to persuade Romeo to stay, but quickly becomes worried for his life when he says he will risk death and stay.
- The conversation Juliet has with her mother about sending someone to poison Romeo is particularly rich in **dramatic irony**. Lady Capulet would be shocked to know the secret the audience shares with Juliet (that she is married to Romeo).
- After Romeo leaves, there is much fiery passion as Juliet and her parents start to argue fiercely. The disagreement becomes a heated discussion between daughter and parents, and ends up as a very emotional shouting match.
- If you read Capulet's part, you will need to work yourself up to an uncontrollable fury. Therefore, you might like to think about how you deliver the list of insults and what voice you will put on when you mockingly quote Juliet.



Yon / yonder: Over there
Jocund: Light-hearted or joyful
Conduit: A fountain
Fie: Exclamation expressing disgust
Beshrew: Curse



Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
 Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day,
 O, now be gone: more light and light it grows. 35
 ROMEO More light and light; more dark and dark our woes!

[NURSE enters JULIET's room]

NURSE Madam!
 JULIET Nurse?
 NURSE Your lady mother is coming to your chamber:
 The day is broke; be wary, look about. 40

[NURSE exits]

JULIET Then, window, let day in, and let life out.
 ROMEO Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend.

[They kiss and ROMEO begins to climb down from JULIET's balcony]

JULIET Art thou gone so? Love, lord, ay, husband, friend!
 I must hear from thee every day in the hour,
 For in a minute there are many days. 45
 O, by this count I shall be much in years
 Ere I again behold my Romeo!

ROMEO *[Looking up to JULIET]* Farewell!
 I will omit no opportunity
 That may convey my greetings, love, to thee. 50

JULIET O think'st 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.

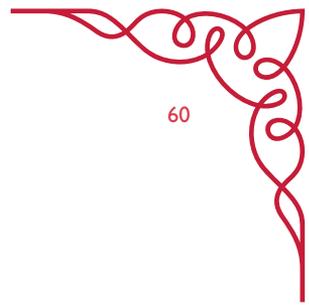
JULIET O God, I have an ill-divining soul!
 Methinks I see thee, now thou art below, 55
 As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.
 ROMEO And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.
 Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu!

[ROMEO exits]



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- 33 **Affray:** Frighten.
 - 34 **Hunt's-up:** Hunters' morning song; a song to awaken a newly married wife.
 - 46–47 **By this count ... behold my Romeo:** Juliet continues her conceit or extended metaphor of a minute containing many hours by suggesting that she will be old before she next sees Romeo.
 - 49 **Omit:** Neglect.
 - 53 **Sweet discourses:** Pleasant conversations.
 - 54 **An ill-divining soul:** A soul that foresees unlucky events.
 - 59 **Dry sorrow drinks our blood:** Elizabethans believed that each sigh caused the loss of a drop of blood. Sorrow is drinking Romeo and Juliet's blood in this way.
 - 59 **Adieu:** Affectionate French word for goodbye.



JULIET O Fortune, Fortune! All men call thee fickle: 60
 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?
 JULIET Who is't that calls? Is it my lady mother? 65
 Is she not down so late, or up so early?
 What unaccustomed cause procures her hither?

[LADY CAPULET enters]

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.
 LADY CAPULET So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend 75
 Which you weep for.

JULIET Feeling so the loss,
 Cannot choose but ever weep the friend.
 LADY CAPULET Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death,
 As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.

JULIET What villain, madam?
 LADY CAPULET That same villain, Romeo. 80

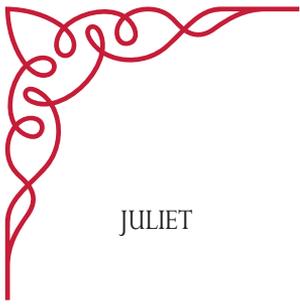
JULIET *[Aside]* Villain and he be many miles asunder –
 God Pardon him! I do, with all my heart;
 And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

LADY CAPULET That is, because the traitor murderer lives.
 JULIET Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands. 85
 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,



- 60 **Fickle:** Quickly changing in taste. Another personification of Fortune.
- 66–67 **Is she not down ... procures her hither:** Juliet wonders whether her mother has not been to bed yet or if she is up early, and what brings her mother to see her.
- 71–73 **An if thou couldst ... some want of wit:** A paraphrase might read: 'You can't bring Tybalt back from the dead, so too much grief shows poor judgment'.
- 81 **Miles asunder:** Separated by many miles.
- 89 **Runagate:** Runaway.



Shall give him such an unaccustomed dram, 90
 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
 Is my poor heart for a kinsman vexed. 95
 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
 To hear him named, and cannot come to him. 100
 To wreak the love I bore my cousin
 Upon his body that slaughtered him!
 LADY CAPULET Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.
 But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.
 JULIET And joy comes well in such a needy time. 105
 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,
 That thou expect'st not nor I looked not for. 110
 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,
 Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride. 115
 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.
 I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam, 120
 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!



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- 90 **Unaccustomed dram:** Unexpected drink (a dram = approximately 2 ml).
 95 **Vexed:** Troubled.
 97 **Temper it:** Juliet is being deliberately ambiguous. Her mother would assume Juliet would be strengthening this poison but the audience would take 'temper' to mean dilute or make the poison weaker.
 99 **Abhors:** Hates.
 103 **Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man:** If you get hold of some poison, I'll find someone to give it to Romeo.
 118–19 **I wonder ... comes to woo:** Juliet thinks the marriage plans are too quick, considering that Paris has not even spoken to her yet.

LADY CAPULET Here comes your father; tell him so yourself,
And see how he will take it at your hands. 125

[CAPULET and NURSE enter]

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?
Evermore showering? In one little body 130

Thou counterfeit'st 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,
Who, raging with thy tears, and they with them, 135
Without a sudden calm, will overset
Thy tempest-tossèd body – How now, wife!
Have you delivered to her our decree?

LADY CAPULET Ay, sir, but she will none, she gives you thanks.
I would the fool were married to her grave! 140

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
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom? 145

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 now, how now, chop-logic! What is this?
'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,
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither. 150 155



131–37 **Thou counterfeit'st ... tempest-tossèd body:** Capulet comments that Juliet seems to imitate a ship ('a bark') braving the sea in extreme weather.

138 **Decree:** Decision or command.

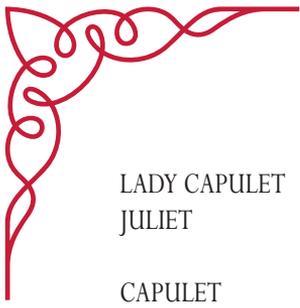
141 **Take me with you:** Equivalent to 'please explain'.

149 **Chop-logic:** Arguing pedantically over fine points; can also mean Juliet is contradicting herself.

151 **Mistress minion:** Cheeky wretch.

153 **But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next:** Just prepare yourself for the wedding night, which is this Thursday.

155 **Drag thee on a hurdle thither:** I will drag you there on a cart ('hurdle') as if you are a criminal going to be executed.



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,
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

CAPULET

Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!
I tell thee what: get thee to church on Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face –

160

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me:
My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest
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!

165

NURSE

God in heaven bless her!

You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

CAPULET

And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,
Good Prudence; smatter with your gossips, go!

170

NURSE

I speak no treason.

CAPULET

O, God ye god-den.

NURSE

May not one speak?

CAPULET

Peace, you mumbling fool!
Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl,
For here we need it not.

LADY CAPULET

You are too hot.

175

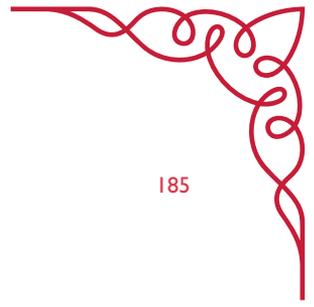
CAPULET

God's bread! It makes me mad.
Day, night; hour, tide, time; work, play;
Alone, in company: still my care hath been
To have her matched; and having now provided
A gentleman of noble parentage,
Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly trained,
Stuffed, as they say, with honourable parts,

180



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- 156 **Green-sickness carrion:** Anaemic or diseased piece of flesh (an insult).
156 **Out, you baggage:** Another insult, equivalent to saying: 'Get out, you cheap hussy'.
157 **Tallow-face:** A further insult meaning greasy-face or pale-face ('tallow' = beef fat).
168 **Hilding:** Good for nothing.
171 **Good Prudence:** A sarcastic title for the Nurse ('prudence' = careful management).
172 **O, God ye god-den:** Capulet dismisses the Nurse sarcastically.
174 **Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl:** Speak your wisdom over drinks at a hen's night (another sarcastic remark).
176 **God's bread:** A mild swear word or blasphemy relating to Communion bread.
180 **Noble parentage:** Good birth (upper class).
181 **Fair demesnes:** Beautiful estates.



Proportioned as one's thought would wish a man;
 And then to have a wretchèd puling fool,
 A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender, 185
 To answer, 'I'll not wed; I cannot love,
 I am too young; I pray you, pardon me'.
 But, as you will not wed, I'll pardon you:
 Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.
 Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest. 190
 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,
 Nor what is mine shall never do thee good. 195
 Trust to't, bethink you; I'll not be forsworn.

[CAPULET exits]

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!
 Delay this marriage for a month, a week; 200
 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.

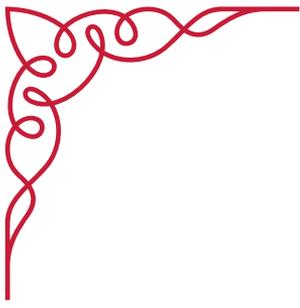
[LADY CAPULET exits]

JULIET O God! – O Nurse, how shall this be prevented? 205
 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.
 Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems 210
 Upon so soft a subject as myself!
 What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy,
 Some comfort, Nurse?

NURSE Faith, here it is:
 Romeo is banished, and all the world to nothing,
 That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you; 215



- 184 **Puling:** Crying or whining.
 185 **Mammet:** Doll or puppet.
 189 **Graze where you will:** Capulet asserts that Juliet will no longer be welcome to stay and eat her meals in his house (this unkind image compares her to a 'grazing' cow).
 196 **I'll not be forsworn:** I will not break my vow.
 210 **Practise stratagems:** Play out cruel plans.



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!
 Romeo's a dishclout to him. An eagle, madam, 220
 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,
 Your first is dead, or 'twere as good he were, 225
 As living here and you no use of him.

JULIET Speak'st thou from thy heart?
 NURSE And from my soul too; or else beshrew them both.
 JULIET Amen!
 NURSE What? 230
 JULIET Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.
 Go in, and tell my lady I am gone,
 Having displeased my father, to Laurence's cell,
 To make confession and to be absolved.

NURSE Marry, I will; and this is wisely done. 235

[NURSE exits]

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
 So many thousand times? Go, counsellor; 240
 Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.
 I'll to the Friar, to know his remedy;
 If all else fail, myself have power to die!

[Exit]



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- 220 **Dishclout:** Dishcloth.
 - 221 **Green:** Green eyes, which were considered desirable.
 - 234 **Absolved:** Forgiven.
 - 238 **My lord:** Juliet refers to Romeo in his role as her husband.
 - 240–41 **Go, counselor ... shall be twain:** Juliet says that her friendship with her Nurse is effectively over from this point on ('twain' = separated into two parts).



QUESTIONS

- 1 How do Romeo and Juliet feel about parting? Give evidence from this scene.
- 2 Why do you think Juliet tells her mother that she wishes Romeo were dead?
- 3 How does Juliet's father respond to her refusal to marry Paris? Why do you think he reacts this way?
- 4 Notice that there are often clear rhyming patterns in Romeo and Juliet's conversation (for examples see lines 25–26: day / away, lines 35–36: grows / woes, lines 40–41: about / out, lines 42–43: descend / friend). Can you think why Shakespeare might have Romeo and Juliet completing each other's lines or using **rhyming couplets**?
- 5 Create a table for your notes, similar to the one below, that shows the anger or the fiery passion of Capulet in this scene.

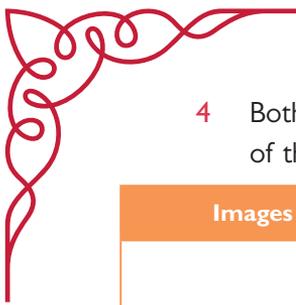
Capulet's anger or fiery passion is seen in ...	Evidence from Act 3 Scene 5
The words he uses	
Other characters' reactions to him	
The punctuation attached to his words	
His implied actions (what the other characters say and do in reaction to him)	

- 6 This scene ends with Juliet going to visit the Friar to seek his 'remedy'.
 - a Why is she going to him for advice?
 - b What do you think his advice might be?



EXTEND

- 1 Romeo and Juliet's language is dominated by examples of **antithesis** (contrasting words and ideas) in lines 1–36. List at least three examples and explain why you think Shakespeare chooses to have them use this language device in such an emotionally touching scene.
- 2 Shakespeare has Romeo and Juliet using the words 'die', 'dead', 'tomb' and 'blood' quite often in this scene. What might this be **foreshadowing**? See **A word about foreshadowing** on page 102 for an explanation of this narrative device.
- 3 What seems strange or even ironic about Juliet saying to her mother, 'I wonder at this haste' (line 118)?

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- 4 Both Romeo and Juliet often use images of nature and music. Make a brief list of these images and create a table similar to the one below for your notes.

Images of nature	Images of music	Challenge: Can you think what these images show us about Romeo and Juliet's love for each other?

- 5 How does the idea of a 'remedy' fit in with the major theme of base emotions spreading like poison and resulting in tragedy?
- 6 In lines 78–102, Juliet's comments to her mother about wanting Romeo dead seem rather ambiguous: they could be understood in more than one way. How does Shakespeare use the ambiguity of Juliet's language to increase the dramatic tension in the scene?



DISCUSS

- 1 The Nurse advises Juliet to marry Paris. Is this helpful advice? Do you think she is being a true friend?
- 2 Sometimes television shows end with what is known as a 'cliffhanger', where the drama or tension is high and we feel impelled to watch the next episode to find out what happens. How does Shakespeare end Act 3 with a 'cliffhanger' and what do you think might happen next?

Zeffirelli and Luhrmann: DVD: ('Disobedient wretch!')



PRESS PLAY

Watch this scene in the Zeffirelli (1968) and Luhrmann (1996) film versions and discuss the following questions in groups or as a class.

- 1 How does each film version show the 'fiery passion' of Juliet and her father in this scene? Think about cinematic devices such as the camera work, soundtrack, lighting and so on.
- 2 Which film version do you think is more effective at showing the fiery passion? Why?

Act 4

Act 4 Scene 1

CHARACTERS

Friar Laurence
Juliet
Paris



IN A NUTSHELL

Paris discusses with Friar Laurence his plans for marrying Juliet. Hiding her distress, Juliet enters and is abrupt and brief in answering Paris' questions. After Paris leaves, Juliet threatens suicide. Friar Laurence devises a plan to reunite Romeo and Juliet which involves Juliet drinking a poison that will send her into a deep sleep for 42 hours and deceive everyone into thinking she is dead.

Before you read

- If you are playing the part of either Friar Laurence or Juliet, remember that you are particularly anxious about the planned marriage but must hide this from Paris.
- Note the use of imagery relating to poison and medicine in this scene. This adds to our understanding of the Friar's speech in Act 2 Scene 3, as now we see the characters' fatal flaws spreading throughout Verona in the way that poison spreads through the body. Juliet's impatience is leading her to consider a desperate act of deception, which could lead to tragic consequences.

V

Inundation: Flood or overflowing
Surcease: Stop or end
Remedy: Solution
Vial: Small bottle



Friar Laurence's cell.

[FRIAR LAURENCE and PARIS enter, mid-way through a conversation]

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:
Uneven is the course; I like it not. 5

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
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway, 10
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.
Now do you know the reason of this haste. 15

FRIAR LAURENCE [*Aside*] I would I knew not why it should be slowed –
Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.

[JULIET enters]

PARIS Happily met, my lady and my wife!

JULIET That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

PARIS That 'may be' must be, love, on Thursday next. 20

JULIET What must be shall be.

FRIAR LAURENCE [*Aside*] That's a certain text.

PARIS Come you to make confession to this Father?

JULIET To answer that, I should confess to you.

PARIS Do not deny to him that you love me.

JULIET I will confess to you that I love him. 25

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.



2 **Father:** Future father-in-law.

3 **I am nothing slow to slack his haste:** I don't want to slow him down; I'm all for hurrying too.

5 **Uneven:** Rough (not properly considered or thought through).

6 **Immoderately:** Without moderation or restraint.

8 **Venus:** The Roman goddess of love.

14 **May be put from her by society:** Some company or socialising ('society') should separate Juliet from these feelings of sorrow.

21 **That's a certain text:** That's obvious.

25 **I will confess to you that I love him:** For Juliet to say that she loves Paris would be a sin (both a lie and an act of adultery), a sin that Juliet would need to confess to the Friar.

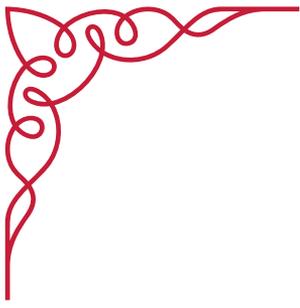
PARIS Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.
 JULIET The tears have got small victory by that, 30
 For it was bad enough before their spite.
 PARIS Thou wrong'st it, more than tears, with that report.
 JULIET That is no slander, sir, which is a truth;
 And what I spake, I spake it to my face.
 PARIS Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it. 35
 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 –
 My lord, we must entreat the time alone. 40
 PARIS God shield I should disturb devotion!
 Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye.
 Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss.

[PARIS exits]

JULIET O shut the door! And when thou hast done so,
 Come weep with me: past hope, past cure, past help! 45
 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.
 JULIET Tell me not, Friar, that thou hear'st of this, 50
 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,



-
- 30–31 **The tears have got ... before their spite:** The tears have made little difference because I was unattractive before them.
- 33 **Slander:** A false and malicious statement.
- 35 **Thy face is mine:** As Juliet's husband, Paris will own her body, which includes her face. In the Bible, in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 7:4), Saint Paul writes that the wife's body belongs to her husband and the husband's body belongs to his wife.
- 36 **It is not mine own:** Juliet seems to be referring to her deception of Paris (she is being two-faced); she could also be referring to the fact that, in the sense used by Paris, her body now 'belongs' to Romeo.
- 37 **Are you at leisure:** Are you free?
- 39 **Pensive:** Sorrowful or anxious.
- 40 **Entreat the time alone:** Request or beg to spend time alone (with Juliet).
- 41 **Shield:** Forbid or prevent.
- 47 **It strains me past the compass of my wits:** I am at my wit's end, or this is past the limit of my wisdom.
- 48 **Prorogue:** Delay.
- 53 **Do thou but call my resolution wise:** If you say my solution or plan is a good idea.



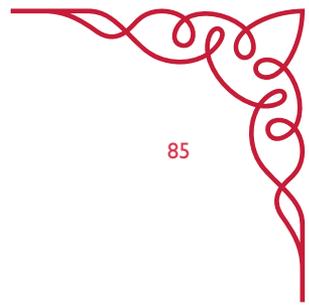
And with this knife I'll help it presently.
 God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands; 55
 And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo sealed,
 Shall be the label to another deed,
 Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
 Turn to another, this shall slay them both.
 Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time, 60
 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
 Could to no issue of true honour bring. 65
 Be not so long to speak: I long to die,
 If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy!

FRIAR LAURENCE Hold, daughter: I do spy a kind of hope,
 Which craves as desperate an execution
 As that is desperate which we would prevent. 70
 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,
 That copes with death himself to scape from it; 75
 And, if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy.

JULIET O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
 From off the battlements of any tower;
 Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk
 Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears; 80
 Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house,
 O'er-covered quite with dead men's rattling bones,
 With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;



- 54 **I'll help it presently:** I'll avoid this situation right now.
- 55–59 **God joined my heart ... shall slay them both:** Juliet reminds the Friar that he married her to Romeo, and that God has joined their hearts. She therefore argues that this hasty marriage to Paris will dishonour her marriage to Romeo. The 'label' to which she refers is the seal attached to a legal deed (title of ownership), which will be transferred to another deed at Juliet's wedding to Paris.
- 61–65 **Give me some present ... of true honour bring:** Tell me what to do or else this knife will make the decision, achieving an outcome that your authority ('commission'), experience and intelligence cannot.
- 69 **Desperate an execution:** Putting into action a desperate plan.
- 74 **To chide away this shame:** To help yourself escape from this terrible (even shameful) situation.
- 75 **That copes with death himself to scape from it:** That encounters death himself and survives, thus escaping death.
- 81 **Charnel-house:** A bone-house or burial-vault, in which bodies or bones are piled.
- 83 **Reeky shanks:** Leg bones that smell rotten.
- 83 **Chapless skulls:** Skulls without jawbones.



Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
 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. 85

FRIAR LAURENCE Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent
 To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow:
 Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone; 90
 Let not thy Nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.
 Take thou this vial, being then in bed,
 And this distilled liquor drink thou off;
 When presently through all thy veins shall run 95
 A cold and drowsy humour, for no pulse
 Shall keep his native progress, but surcease:
 No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou liv'st;
 The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
 To paly ashes, thy eyes' windows fall, 100
 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
 Thou shalt continue two and forty hours, 105
 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,
 In thy best robes uncovered on the bier 110
 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,
 And hither shall he come; and he and I 115
 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,
 Abate thy valour in the acting it. 120



-
- 85 **Shroud:** A burial cloth.
 - 96–97 **No pulse / Shall keep his native progress:** No-one will be able to feel a pulse.
 - 97 **Surcease:** Stop.
 - 111 **Borne:** Carried.
 - 119–20 **If no inconstant toy ... in the acting it:** If no trifling thing, or womanly fear, reduces your bravery to execute this plan.

JULIET Give me, give me! O, tell not me 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.
 JULIET Love give me strength, and strength shall help afford!
 Farewell, dear Father!

125

[Both exit]

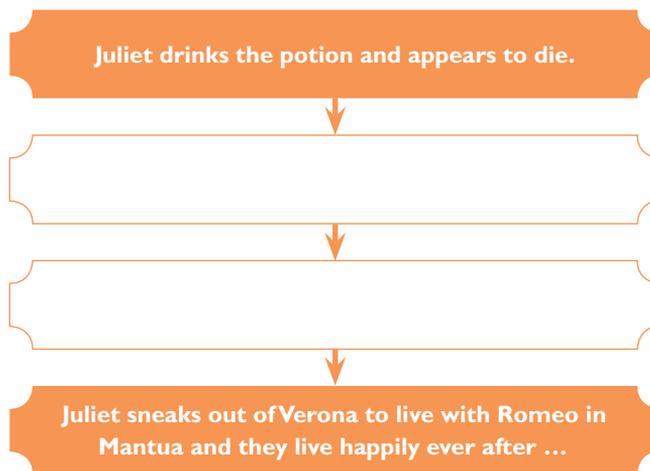


123 **Resolve:** Determination.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Quote some of Juliet's lines or phrases that are examples of **hyperbole**. For an explanation of hyperbole, see page 122.
- 2 What is Shakespeare trying to show us about Juliet's state of mind by using these examples of hyperbole?
- 3 Draw up a flow chart similar to the one below to explain Friar Laurence's plan (use more boxes if necessary).

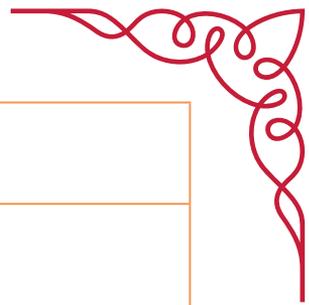


- 4 In a different coloured pen, add some notes to your flow chart to explain the risks involved with Friar Laurence's plan – what could go wrong at each stage?



EXTEND

- 1 Why do you think Shakespeare starts this scene mid-conversation? What dramatic purpose does this narrative device perform?
- 2 This scene continues a **major theme**: deception leads to misunderstanding and results in tragedy. Create a table similar to the one on the following page for your notes.



What deception occurs in the second half of this scene?	
Can you predict how this deception might lead to misunderstanding?	
What tragedy might result from the deception and misunderstanding?	



DISCUSS

- 1 Can you think of an alternative plan to solve Juliet's problem? Explain why your alternative solution is better than the Friar's plan.
- 2 If you were given the role of directing a stage version of this scene (especially lines 77–88), how would you show Juliet's desperation? Consider theatrical devices such as blocking (position and movement of characters), gestures, facial expressions and actions.

Zeffirelli and Luhrmann: DVD ('The Friar's Plan')



PRESS PLAY

- View the Zeffirelli (1968) and Luhrmann (1996) versions of this scene. Pay close attention to the actor who plays Juliet.
- 1 Discuss what Juliet is doing while listening to the Friar outline his plan.
 - 2 Is there anything that the 'listening' actor could have done more effectively? Keep this in mind for your next performance opportunity.



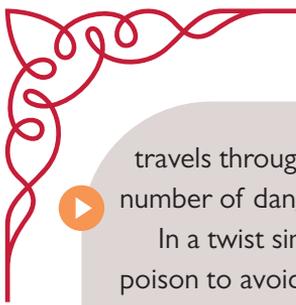
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest ...

Where did Shakespeare get the idea for this drug?

There were some very basic anaesthetics in Shakespeare's day but we still don't have a drug or potion that would give a living person the appearance of death. It seems Shakespeare stole the idea from an ancient Greek romance called *The Ephesian Tale*, written in the second century BC.

Like *Romeo and Juliet* this story begins with two teenagers, Habrocomes and Anthia, falling passionately and hopelessly in love. They marry and journey together to Egypt, but their ship is overrun by pirates. As a result, they become separated. During their





travels through many exotic locations in Europe, Africa and Asia, they survive a number of dangerous trials.

In a twist similar to the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, the heroine Anthia tries to take poison to avoid a marriage to another man. However, the poison she drinks is in fact a drug that will only make her appear dead. She wakes later in the tomb and is found by grave robbers, who sell her into slavery. Unlike *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Ephesian Tale* ends happily with the lovers reunited.

Act 4 Scene 2

CHARACTERS

Capulet
Juliet
Lady Capulet
Nurse
Servants
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

It is the evening before the big wedding day. Juliet returns home, pretending to be an obedient daughter. Happy at her apparent change of heart, Capulet busies himself about the house.

Before you read

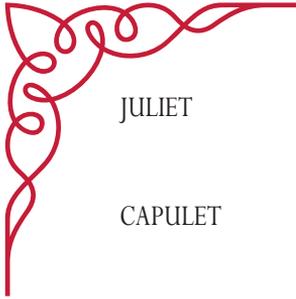
- Juliet must pretend to be an obedient daughter, happy to marry Paris in the morning. Her lines should be delivered with this in mind.
- Whoever plays the part of Capulet needs to realise that he can be impatient and demanding. Notice all the commands he issues! You might also note the contrast between the venom of Capulet's tone at the end of Act 3 and his far more gentle and light-hearted tone at the end of this scene.



Peevish: Spiteful and irritable

Gadding: Wandering around on a fun adventure, basically wasting time

Becomèd: Suitable or appropriate



JULIET I met the youthful lord at Laurence's cell,
And gave him what becomèd love I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty. 25

CAPULET Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.
This is as't should be – Let me see the County.
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. 30

JULIET Nurse, will you go with me into my closet,
To help me sort such needful ornaments
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. 35

[JULIET and NURSE exit]

LADY CAPULET We shall be short in our provision:
'Tis now near night.

CAPULET Tush, I will stir about,
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; 40
I'll play the housewife for this once – What, ho! –
They are all forth. Well, I will walk myself
To County Paris, to prepare him up
Against tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light,
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed. 45

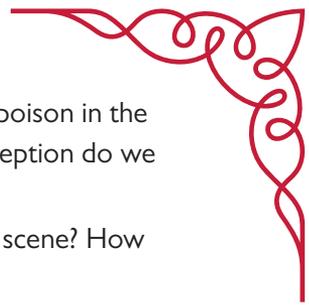
[All exit]

- 
- 31 **Closet:** Private room or bedchamber.
33 **To furnish me:** For me to wear.
36 **Our provision:** What we had planned to provide (for the wedding guests).
37 **Tush:** A mild rebuke, something like 'nonsense'.
39 **Deck up her:** Dress her up.
42 **They are all forth:** They have all gone away.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What is Capulet's view of Juliet in the early stages of this scene (lines 11–14)? How does his opinion of her change during the course of the scene?
- 2 Consider the sense of rushed excitement or chaos in this scene.
 - a How does Shakespeare create this mood or atmosphere?
 - b What props would you use to help create a sense of chaos or excitement?
 - c What music might help to reinforce this atmosphere?



- 3 Remember that, throughout the play, deception spreads like poison in the way that a disease does throughout the body. What new deception do we see in this scene?
- 4 What likeable qualities does Shakespeare give Capulet in this scene? How does this affect your opinion of Capulet?
- 5 The **mood** of a piece of writing generally refers to the attitude or feeling evoked (stirred up) in the reader. For example, Shakespeare creates a dark, even foreboding mood at the end of Act 3, but an excited and joyful mood at the end of Act 2 Scene 2, the balcony scene. How would you describe the mood created by the final two lines of this scene? What do you think creates this mood?



- I Briefly describe the way Shakespeare presents Capulet in this scene. In your answer discuss Capulet's language, his use of repetition and how he is contrasted to his wife. Create a table similar to the one below for your notes.

What does Capulet's language (short and abrupt sentences, issuing of commands) and the use of exclamation marks reveal about his character?	
What does his use of repetition tell us about him?	
How does Capulet's behaviour contrast to the way his wife acts? Does this highlight any aspects of his character to us?	

- 2 How does Shakespeare use **dramatic irony** in this scene to build tension and arouse the expectations of the audience? Compare the previous scenes with the final lines of this scene.



Act 4 Scene 3

CHARACTERS

Juliet
Lady Capulet
Nurse



IN A NUTSHELL

Juliet pretends that she wishes to go to bed and pray, ready for the wedding the next day. After her mother and Nurse leave, she debates whether or not to drink the potion, which she eventually does.

Before you read

- This is a particularly tense scene. Juliet is in two minds whether or not to go ahead with the Friar's plan. Her state of anxiety increases throughout the scene, which should be reflected in the way Juliet's part is performed or read.
- Note carefully that lines 18 and 20 are irregular: they do not have the usual ten beats. There should be a pause or a break in the rhythm in these places, perhaps to give Juliet time to examine the vial and to contemplate her decision.



Attires: Clothes

Orisons: Prayers

Juliet's chamber.

[JULIET and NURSE enter]

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,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross and full of sin.

5

[LADY CAPULET enters]

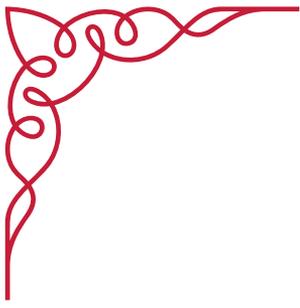
LADY CAPULET What, are you busy, ho? Need you my help?
JULIET No, madam; we have culled such necessaries



4 **State:** The condition of Juliet's soul.

5 **Cross:** Perverse.

7 **Culled:** Selected.



As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
 Where, for these many hundred years, the bones 40
 Of all my buried ancestors are packed;
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
 Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,
 At some hours in the night spirits resort –
 Alack, alack, is it not like that I, 45
 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,
 Environèd with all these hideous fears? 50
 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 desperate brains? –
 O, look! Methinks I see my cousin's ghost 55
 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.

[JULIET drinks from the vial and falls upon her bed]



- 42 **Green:** Fresh (newly buried).
- 47 **Shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth:** Mandrake roots were thought to shriek when they were pulled from the earth and their screams were thought to cause madness in those who heard them.
- 49 **Distraught:** Terrified.
- 50 **Environèd with:** Surrounded by.



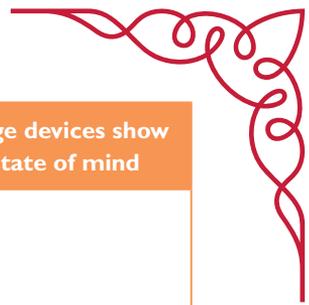
QUESTIONS

- 1 What reason does Juliet give for believing that the Friar might poison her? Why does she finally decide this is unlikely?
- 2 Why do you think Juliet asks so many questions of herself in this scene? What does this show us about her state of mind?



EXTEND

Shakespeare shows Juliet's state of mind through various elements of language; Question 2 (above) points out one way. Construct a table for your notes like the one on the next page to help you focus on other aspects of Juliet's language in this scene.



Element of language	Examples	What these language devices show us about Juliet's state of mind
Punctuation and short sentence length	Numerous question marks and exclamation marks and many short sentences	
Interruption to the rhythm of the language (iambic pentameter)	See lines 18 and 20	
Gruesome imagery	'madly play with my forefathers' joints' (line 51) 'dash out my desperate brains' (line 54)	
Harsh sounding, negative words	'mangled ... plucked ... stifled'	

Zeffirelli and Luhrmann: DVD ('What if it be a poison ...?')



Compare the Zeffirelli (1968) and Luhrmann (1996) film versions of this scene. Discuss as a class which version you think more effectively considers aspects such as voice, movement and body language to present Juliet's anxiety.

Also consider how the film versions are successfully able to include specific cinematic devices (such as sound, lighting and camera work) to complement their presentation of Juliet's anxiety.



Dates and quinces in the pastry ...

A wedding feast

Noble families and rich merchants in Renaissance Italy indulged in great feasts, and a wedding banquet was among the greatest of occasions. In 1488 a Milanese wedding banquet included roast partridge, turtledove, pheasant, pigeon, quail, chicken with sugar and rose water, wild boar, a roast sheep in cherry sauce, a roast peacock and a roast suckling pig. There were also a number of sweeter dishes, including preserves made with sugar and honey, quinces cooked with sugar, cinnamon, pine nuts and artichoke, various pastries and ten different types of torte (sponge cake).





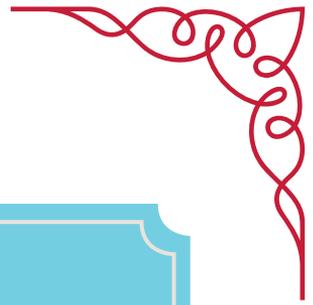
Rich Elizabethans also loved banquets and these were seen as opportunities to show off their wealth. An English banquet usually included a great deal of seafood, such as crabs, salmon, trout and eel. Pastries and tarts were also popular. The sweeter dishes, not always served before the savoury ones, might have included jellies, pears with caraway, wafers, fritters, dried fruits and frumenty (a type of wheat boiled in milk and flavoured with sugars and spices). The tables were richly decorated and the centre-piece was often an exotic bird such as a swan or a peacock with its feathers stuck back on to make it look as lifelike as possible. Unfortunately, it was only the rich who ate this well. Poorer people ate sausages, cabbage, pottages, stews and cheaper kinds of fish.

People would eat with a spoon and their own knife. While forks were popular in Europe, the English thought them strange and they were not widely used until more than 100 years after Shakespeare's death.



Seventeenth-century painting of a banquet by Hieronymus Francken II

Act 4 Scene 4



CHARACTERS

Capulet
Lady Capulet
Nurse
Servants
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]



IN A NUTSHELL

Everyone in the Capulet household is frantically running around at three o'clock in the morning preparing the house for the wedding. The Nurse is sent to wake Juliet.

Before you read

- You might have noticed the dramatic mood changes between scenes, from serious tension to the more trivial and light-hearted preparations for the wedding.
- This scene paints Capulet in a more positive light than Act 3. Consider how Capulet might repeat the words, 'Make haste!' He is issuing many instructions and many productions of the play have servants hurrying in and out.



Mouse-hunt: A man who runs after women
Jealous-hood: A jealous woman

Hall in the Capulet house.

[LADY CAPULET and NURSE enter, in a hurry, followed by several SERVANTS, who are carrying spits, logs and baskets]

LADY CAPULET Hold, take these keys, and fetch more spices, Nurse.

NURSE They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.

[CAPULET enters]

CAPULET Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock hath crowed,
The curfew-bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock!



- 2 **Pastry:** The section of the kitchen where pastry was made.
- 3 **The second cock has crowed:** The cock (rooster) was said to crow at midnight, at 3 am and then at daybreak.
- 4 **Curfew-bell:** Bell announcing daylight.



QUESTIONS

- 1 How many times does Capulet tell others to 'make haste' in this scene? What is Shakespeare showing us about Capulet?
- 2 Are there any humorous or light-hearted aspects that you have noticed in this scene? What sort of atmosphere is Shakespeare looking to create?
- 3 The scene before this and the scene that follows contain serious elements. Why do you think Shakespeare chooses to place this light-hearted, humorous scene between two sombre scenes? What purpose do you think it serves?

Act 4 Scene 5

CHARACTERS

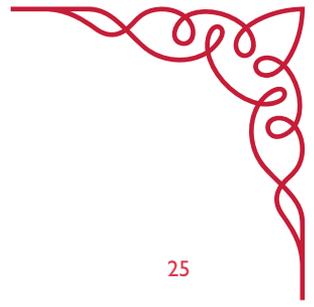
Nurse
Capulet
Friar Laurence
Peter
Lady Capulet
1ST Musician
Paris
2ND Musician
3RD Musician
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

Juliet's Nurse discovers Juliet's body and believes she is dead. As a result, the house is thrown into chaos and everyone weeps over Juliet. Paris enters with Friar Laurence, who eventually calms everyone involved and advises them to begin making preparations for Juliet's funeral. Peter, Capulet's household servant who attends the Nurse, jokes with the musicians, whom Paris has brought to wake Juliet.

Before you read

- Take note of the frequent use of repetition in this scene. Everyone is extraordinarily upset and seems to repeat the same words and phrases over and over again. Their responses seem over-the-top or melodramatic. Could it be that Shakespeare writes this way to remind us that Juliet is not really dead? See what you think.
- When the Friar and Paris arrive later in this scene, they are accompanied by a group of musicians. It was a courtly custom in Shakespeare's England to wake newly married couples with music, organised by friends or relatives. This sometimes applied to the bride on the morning of her wedding day.



[*CAPULET enters*]

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!

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.

25

NURSE O lamentable day!

LADY CAPULET O woeful time!

30

CAPULET Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,
Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak.

[*FRIAR LAURENCE and PARIS enter, accompanied by MUSICIANS*]

FRIAR LAURENCE Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

CAPULET Ready to go, but never to return –
O son! The night before thy wedding day
Hath Death lain with thy wife. 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,
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.

35

PARIS Have I thought long to see this morning's face,
And doth it give me such a sight as this?

40

LADY CAPULET Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw
In lasting labour 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!

45

NURSE O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!
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!

50

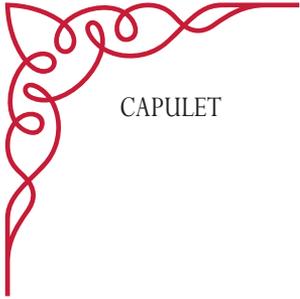
PARIS Beguiled, divorcèd, wrongèd, spited, slain!
Most detestable Death, by thee beguiled,
By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown!
O love! O life! Not life, but love in death!

55



37 **Deflowered:** Seduced; a term for a woman losing her virginity, which is ironic as Juliet has already slept with her husband, Romeo.

47 **Solace in:** Take comfort in.

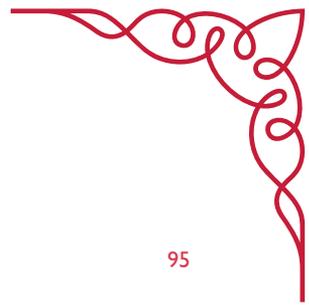


CAPULET Despised, distressed, hated, martyred, killed!
 Uncomfortable time, why cam'st thou now 60
 To murder, murder our solemnity?
 O child! O child! My soul, and not my child!
 Dead art thou! Alack! My child is dead;
 And with my child my joys are buried.

FRIAR LAURENCE Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure lives not 65
 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,
 But heaven keeps his part in eternal life. 70
 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?
 O, in this love, you love your child so ill, 75
 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
 On this fair corpse; and, as the custom is, 80
 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,
 Turn from their office to black funeral: 85
 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 corpse,
 And all things change them to the contrary. 90

-
- 
- 59 **Martyred:** Killed, usually for religious belief.
- 71–72 **The most you sought ... should be advanced:** You hoped she would be advanced in rank, by marrying Paris, but the best promotion you can hope for her is to heaven.
- 81 **Best array:** Best clothes.
- 82–83 **For though fond ... reason's merriment:** The Friar says that it is natural to lament death and at the same time it is silly ('fond') because our reason assures us that heaven is better than earthly life.
- 85 **Their office:** Their proper purposes.
- 86 **Melancholy bells:** Bells playing funeral music.
- 88 **Solemn hymns to sullen dirges change:** Our songs of celebration have become depressing funeral songs.



FRIAR LAURENCE Sir, go you in; and, madam, go with him;
 And go, Sir Paris. Everyone prepare
 To follow this fair corpse unto her grave.
 The heavens do lour upon you for some ill;
 Move them no more by crossing their high will.

95

[CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, PARIS and FRIAR LAURENCE exit]

1ST 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.

[NURSE exits]

1ST MUSICIAN Ay, by my troth, the case may be amended.

[PETER enters]

PETER Musicians, O, musicians, 'Heart's Ease', 'Heart's Ease'! O, an you will have me live, play 'Heart's Ease'. 100

1ST MUSICIAN Why 'Heart's Ease'?

PETER O, musicians, because my heart itself plays 'My heart is full of woe'.
 O, play me some merry dump, to comfort me.

1ST MUSICIAN Not a dump we: 'tis no time to play now. 105

PETER You will not, then?

1ST MUSICIAN No.

PETER I will then give it you soundly.

1ST MUSICIAN What will you give us?

PETER No money, on my faith, but the gleek. 110
 I will give you the minstrel.

1ST MUSICIAN Then I will 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?

1ST MUSICIAN An you *re* us and *fa* us, you note us. 115

2ND MUSICIAN Pray you, put up your dagger, and put out your wit.



94 **Lour:** To frown on.

95 **Move them no more by crossing their high will:** Do not look to contradict heavenly powers that are greater than you.

100 **Heart's Ease:** The title of a popular song of the time.

104 **Merry dump:** A dump is a sad tune so a merry dump would be a contradiction or an oxymoron.

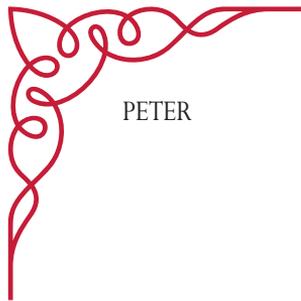
108 **Soundly:** Loudly.

110 **Gleek:** Scorn.

111 **Minstrel:** Slave.

113 **Pate:** Head.

113–14 **I will carry ... note us:** Some punning on the word note and other musical terms. Crotchets are musical notes and strange ideas. 'Re' and 'fa' are notes on the musical scale (as in *do, re, me* ...).



PETER Then have at you with my wit! I will dry-beat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger. Answer me like men:

*When griping grief the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then music with her silver sound –* 120

Why ‘silver sound’? Why ‘music with her silver sound’? What say you, Simon Catling?

1ST MUSICIAN Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

PETER Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck? 125

2ND MUSICIAN I say ‘silver sound’ because musicians sound for silver.

PETER Pretty too! What say you, James Soundpost?

3RD MUSICIAN Faith, I know not what to say.

PETER O, 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: 130

*Then music with her silver sound
With speedy help doth lend redress.*

[PETER exits]

1ST MUSICIAN What a pestilent knave is this same!

2ND MUSICIAN Hang him, Jack! Come, we’ll in here, tarry for the mourners, and stay dinner. 135

[All exit]



119–21 **When griping ... her silver sound:** Part of a song by Richard Edwardes that was popular in Shakespeare’s time.

123 **Catling:** A string for a medieval instrument called a lute.

125 **Prates:** Talks nonsense.

125 **Rebeck:** A fiddle (similar to a violin).

126 **Sound for silver:** Play music for silver coins.

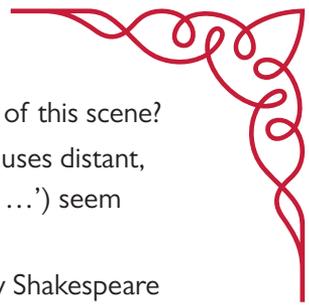
127 **Soundpost:** A small wooden peg inside a violin and other stringed instruments.

129 **I cry you mercy:** I beg your pardon.

132 **Redress:** Relief.

133 **What a pestilent knave is this same:** The musician complains about Peter after he leaves.

134 **Tarry:** Wait around.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What does Juliet's Nurse think Juliet is doing at the beginning of this scene?
- 2 Friar Laurence seems quite casual about Juliet's death and he uses distant, unemotional language. Does his response ('dry up your tears ...') seem completely appropriate here? Explain your answer.
- 3 Choose two of the following literary devices and explain how Shakespeare uses each to show the characters' grief when they find Juliet 'dead'. Create a table similar to the one below for your notes.

Repetition of words and phrases (e.g. Alas, alas!)	
Emotive language (e.g. woe, lamentable, alack, poor, unhappy, death)	
Punctuation and short sentences	

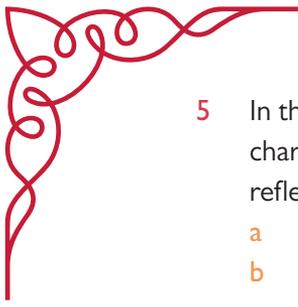


EXTEND

- 1 The deception in this scene continues to spread through the Friar's conspiracy in the fake death. Considering he is a man of the Church, do you think there is anything ironic about this?
- 2 In this scene, Capulet uses a series of opposites (or **antitheses**) to describe aspects of a wedding and a funeral. Create a table similar to the following for your notes with examples of the **opposites** he uses (include line numbers as shown).

Wedding	Funeral
Wedding instruments (line 86)	Melancholy bells (line 86)

- 3 Why do you think Shakespeare uses the literary technique of **antithesis** here? What is he trying to show?
- 4 Besides abundant repetition, some characters in this scene pour out extensive lists of words to express the same idea (for example, see lines 55 and 59). This is known as **cumulation**.
 - a Quote an example of cumulation used in this scene.
 - b What dramatic effect do you think Shakespeare seeks to create by using cumulation at this point in the play?



- 5 In this scene, Shakespeare once again (see Act 3 Scene 3) crafts various characters' dialogue to act as a **mirror**, and the very word order acts like a reflection or a poetic reversal (e.g. lines 23–24 and line 46).
 - a Copy lines 23–24 and 46, and indicate which words are 'mirrored'.
 - b What do you think might have been Shakespeare's purpose for creating poetic reversals or mirroring of words in this scene?
- 6 The Friar claims here that 'heaven' (or fate) is punishing the Capulets. Turn back to the Prologue and see if you can work out the answers to the following.
 - a For what reason(s) might 'heaven' (or fate) be punishing the Capulets?
 - b Quote at least two phrases or lines from the Prologue that might be evidence for your previous answer.



DISCUSS

- 1 Remember: Juliet is not really dead; she is only unconscious. But Shakespeare has already told us in the Prologue that both Romeo and Juliet will die. With only three scenes to go, what do you think might happen next? Try to link this to the idea of deception, leading to misunderstanding, ultimately resulting in tragedy.
- 2 If you were to include the Musicians' dialogue when directing your own version of the play:
 - a What tone or atmosphere would you seek to create?
 - b Why?
 - c How would you use various theatrical devices (e.g. the characters' use of voice and actions, or the lighting and music) to create your desired tone?

Act 5

Act 5 Scene 1

CHARACTERS

Romeo
Balthasar
Apothecary



IN A NUTSHELL

Waking up, Romeo recalls that he has dreamed of Juliet. Balthasar, his servant, arrives with the news of Juliet's death and Romeo plans to return to Verona to die beside her. After he sends Balthasar off to hire horses for their journey, Romeo buys poison from a poor apothecary.

Before you read

- A key to understanding this scene and everything that happens from now on is to realise that Friar Laurence's message to Romeo (the 'cunning plan') does not reach him.
- When Romeo hears of Juliet's death, his response is simple and delivered in a single line: 'Is it even so? Then I defy you, stars!' It is important that you don't pass over this as simply another line. Remember, he has just heard that Juliet, his reason for living, is dead!
- 'Tush' is usually a mild expression of rebuke or disgust, but here Romeo is unlikely to deliver it mildly.

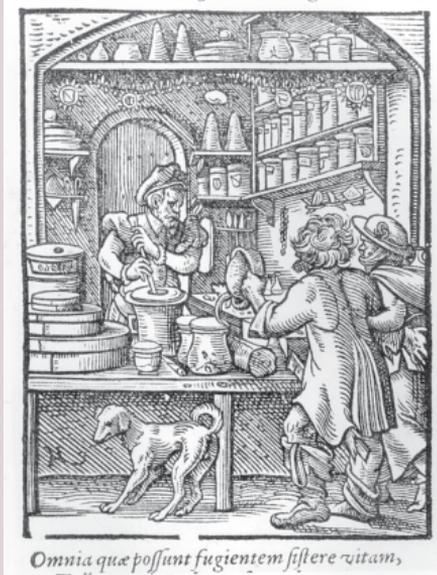


Flattering: Pleasing
Presage: Give a sign or warning of something
Apothecary: Chemist or pharmacist

H

I do remember an apothecary ...

The apothecary



Sixteenth-century German woodcut of an apothecary

In this scene, Romeo visits an apothecary to buy poison. Although Shakespeare's day saw great advances in many areas of science, medicine still lagged behind. If people were sick they would probably be treated with herbal medicine bought from an apothecary (from the Greek word *apothēkē*, meaning 'storehouse').

Only the wealthiest people in sixteenth-century London could afford doctors, so the apothecary fulfilled the role of both a GP and a modern-day pharmacist. As well as selling a number of herbal medicines, perfumes and sweets, he would give advice to his patients.

The mixtures an apothecary might sell would not only include herb and plant matter but also stranger substances like bat dung,

spiders' webs and the dried windpipes of cockerels. Romeo's description of the apothecary's shop includes an alligator skin and a hanging tortoise shell. This is consistent with what we know about apothecaries' shops. As he made his own cures, it is likely that the apothecary would have a good knowledge of plants and therefore be the right person from whom to buy an illegal poison.

A Street in Mantua.

[ROMEO enters]

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
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.

5



3 **My bosom's lord:** That which rules my heart: love.

4 **An unaccustomed spirit:** Feelings that I haven't experienced for a long time (a sense of peace).

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.
Ah me! How sweet is love itself possessed,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

10

[BALTHASAR enters, dressed in walking boots]

News from Verona! – How now, Balthasar!
Dost thou not bring me letters from the Friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How fares my Juliet? That I ask again,
For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

15

BALTHASAR Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.

I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
And presently took post to tell it you.

20

O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.
ROMEO Is it even so? Then I defy you, stars!
Thou know'st my lodging: get me ink and paper,
And hire post-horses; I will hence tonight.

25

BALTHASAR I do beseech you, sir, have patience:
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

ROMEO Tush, thou art deceived:
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.
Hast thou no letters to me from the Friar?

30

BALTHASAR No, my good lord.

ROMEO No matter; get thee gone,
And hire those horses; I'll be with thee straight.

[BALTHASAR exits]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.
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

35

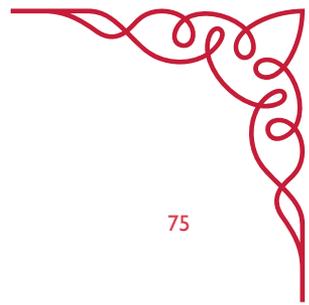


18 **Monument:** Tomb.

21 **Took post:** Rushed.

26 **Post-horses:** Fast horses.

28–29 **Your looks ... do import / Some misadventure:** You look like you are about to do something dangerous.



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.

APOTHECARY My poverty, but not my will, consents. 75

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.

ROMEO There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,
 Doing more murders in this loathsome world
 Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell. 80

I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.

Farewell: buy food, and get thyself in flesh –

Come, cordial and not poison, go with me 85

To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

[Both exit]



79 **Dispatch you:** Kill you.

82 **Compounds:** Mixtures.

84 **Buy food, and get thyself in flesh:** Buy some food to fatten yourself up.

85 **Cordial and not poison:** See Question 5 below.



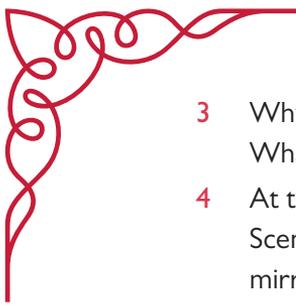
QUESTIONS

- 1 How does Romeo feel at the beginning of the scene? Quote a phrase or two as evidence.
- 2 How does this make us feel, bearing in mind what we know from the Prologue? Do we share his joy?
- 3 Describe the language Romeo uses when Balthasar tells him of Juliet's death. How is it different from the language he used earlier in the play?
- 4 Why doesn't the apothecary want to sell Romeo the poison?
- 5 A 'cordial' is a sweet and healthy drink. Why do you think Romeo chooses to describe the poison as a cordial? In what way might death be sweet for him?



EXTEND

- 1 Read lines 24–36 again. Is it fate or his own impatience that seems to be controlling Romeo's actions in this scene? Quote several phrases or lines as evidence.
- 2 After Balthasar leaves, Romeo delivers a long speech in which he describes the apothecary's shop. Why do you think Shakespeare has put this speech here? What dramatic purpose does it serve?

- 
- 3 Why do you think Romeo describes money as poison in this scene? What literary device is he using here and what do you think he might mean?
 - 4 At times, Shakespeare's characters speak using poetic reversals (see Act 3 Scene 3, Extend question 1). In Act 5 Scene 1, lines 16–17, Balthasar mirrors or reverses the order of Romeo's words. What effect do you think Shakespeare creates by this technique? What message or idea might he be conveying?



DISCUSS

In your opinion, is Shakespeare successful in creating a sense of dramatic tension at the end of this scene? Think about the Friar's plan and what we have been told in the Prologue. In the next scene, we find out that Romeo does not receive the Friar's letter warning him of the plan.



So fearful were they of infection ...

The plague

In 1347, the plague (or Black Death) arrived in Europe. By the end of the century, successive outbreaks of the epidemic had wiped out almost half of the population.

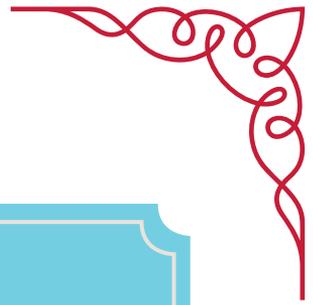
There were two types of plague: bubonic and pneumonic. The bubonic plague was caused by a bite from the fleas that lived on rats. Victims of the bubonic plague would develop large apple-sized swellings (called buboes) around their groin, armpits and neck. The pneumonic plague occurred when the infection entered the lungs. The victim would cough up blood, run high fevers and suffer from delirium. This form of the plague spread through victims' coughing and sneezing, and was highly contagious.

The disease spread particularly rapidly through towns and cities such as London, which were unhealthy and overcrowded. The authorities were unaware of what was causing the epidemic and how to treat it. The only approach that seemed to work was quarantining (or separating) the sufferers from others. As a result, many people were boarded up in their houses and largely cut off from the outside world until they had received a certificate of health. Few people who contracted the plague survived.

Shakespeare would have been particularly mindful of the plague. In the years before he was born, his older sisters, Joan and Margaret, died from it. The plague struck in 1593, 1603 and 1608, while Shakespeare was living in London, and the theatres were closed as a result of these epidemics.

In Act 5 Scene 2, Friar John has been unable to deliver Friar Laurence's letter to Romeo, or persuade anyone else to do so, because of the fear of 'infection'.

Act 5 Scene 2



CHARACTERS

Friar Laurence
Friar John



IN A NUTSHELL

Friar John informs Friar Laurence that he has been unable to deliver any message to Romeo, as the plague has prevented him from travelling. Worried, Friar Laurence decides to write again to Romeo, and to go to Juliet's tomb to be there when she awakes.

Before you read

- If you read Friar Laurence's lines, think about how you will react to the news that Friar John has been unable to deliver the letter. Everything depends on Romeo receiving this letter. Everything!
- Students often find Friar John's main speech (lines 5–12) confusing. In this speech he informs Friar Laurence that another brother of his order (who was caring for plague victims) was barred from leaving the house by some of the locals who were fearful that the two Friars would spread the plague. The speech is relatively unimportant so don't worry if you find it difficult.



Infection: Being contaminated by the plague
Nice: Trivial or unimportant
Dear import: Great importance

Friar Laurence's cell.

[FRIAR JOHN enters]

FRIAR JOHN Holy Franciscan Friar! Brother, ho!

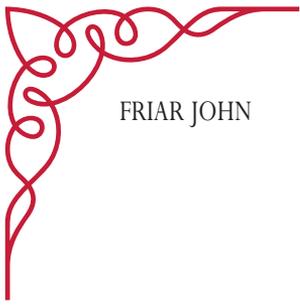
[FRIAR LAURENCE enters]

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.



4

If his mind be writ: If his thoughts are in writing.



FRIAR JOHN Going to find a bare-foot brother out, 5
 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
 Where the infectious pestilence did reign, 10
 Sealed up the doors and would not let us forth,
 So that my speed to Mantua there was stayed.

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
 May do much danger. Friar John, go hence; 20
 Get me an iron crow, and bring it straight
 Unto my cell.

FRIAR JOHN Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

[FRIAR JOHN exits]

FRIAR LAURENCE Now must I to the monument alone.
 Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake:
 She will beshrew me much that Romeo 25
 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 corpse, closed in a dead man's tomb!

[FRIAR LAURENCE exits]

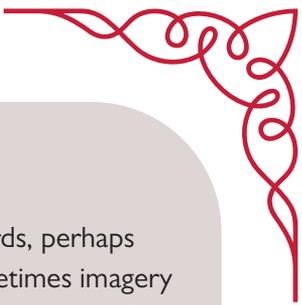


- 5–12 **Going to find ... to Mantua there was stayed:** See **Before you read** (page 177).
- 5 **Bare-foot brother:** Many monks and priests took vows of poverty, which included not wearing shoes.
- 18–19 **Not nice ... dear import:** Not trivial but very important.
- 21 **Get me an iron crow:** Get me a crowbar (to break into the tomb where Juliet lies).
- 25 **Beshrew me:** Curse me or tell me off.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the message that Friar Laurence has been unable to have Friar John deliver to Romeo?
- 2 What does Friar Laurence plan to do to avoid disaster?
- 3 See if you can find and explain an **oxymoron** that Friar Laurence uses at the end of this scene.



Imagery and metaphor

When we create pictures in our imagination simply by our choice of words, perhaps comparing one thing with another, this is known as using **imagery**. Sometimes imagery is all about seeing everyday things in a fresh, new way. Imagery can be in the form of a **simile** ('the beach is like a glistening quarter of an orange'), when we say one thing is *like* another. Imagery can also be in the form of a **metaphor** ('the beach is a glistening quarter of an orange'), when one object is said to *be* another – not literally, of course, but metaphorically. Imagery can also just be about what we see (light or darkness, mountains or plains, cities or deserts) and in this sense it can be richly descriptive, or simple and brief.

There are other forms of imagery (e.g. personification, symbolism, imagery associated with colour, sound, touch, taste and smell) but we will focus on metaphors for now. Shakespeare uses metaphors a great deal in *Romeo and Juliet*. Remember that when Romeo first meets Juliet in Act 1 Scene 5, he compares her with a 'torch' that lights up a room. In Act 2 Scene 2 he takes this metaphor to a new level and says that the light that breaks 'through yonder window' is in fact Juliet, that she 'is the east' (the sun, who lights up his whole world). This is part of the beauty of Shakespeare's language: he allows his characters to speak in metaphors, in this case imaginatively using the imagery of light to describe Juliet's effect on Romeo. Look for a continuation of this imagery in Act 5 Scene 3.

Another metaphor that Shakespeare uses frequently throughout *Romeo and Juliet* compares base emotions with poison. In this sense, hatred and bitterness have now infected the characters, just as poison might spread through someone's body or a disease might spread throughout a city. Therefore, the poison in *Romeo and Juliet* is no longer merely a metaphor – in the case of the plague or the potion that Romeo buys, it is real or **literal**.

Shakespeare cleverly **parallels** two ideas in Act 5 Scene 2; he has them running alongside each other to show their similarities: (1) the **plague**, which is the historical and very physical event that infects Verona, and (2) the **moral disease** – in this case, bitterness and hatred – that is contaminating Verona at the same time.

In another of Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet*, the King (Claudius) is corrupt, thus the whole of Denmark is morally contaminated as a result. One of the characters, Marcellus, rightly observes that 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark', and it is no accident that numerous characters die as a result of being physically poisoned.



Act 5 Scene 3 (Part 1)

CHARACTERS

Romeo
Friar Laurence
Juliet
Paris
Balthasar
Page
1ST Watchman
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

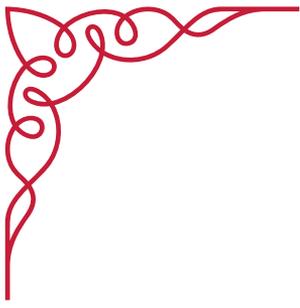
Paris goes to lay flowers at Juliet's monument and overhears Romeo arriving. He attempts to arrest Romeo, they fight and Paris is killed. Romeo finds Juliet, says his farewell to her, and kills himself by drinking poison. Friar Laurence arrives as Juliet wakes but cannot persuade her to leave. The Friar runs off and Juliet, overcome by the grief of finding Romeo dead beside her, kills herself with a dagger.

Before you read

- It might be useful, as a class, to look closely at Romeo's final soliloquy (lines 88–120), beginning: 'How oft when men are at the point of death ...' At first, Romeo reflects that death has not affected Juliet's beauty, and reasons that death is keeping her preserved as his lover ('paramour'). He embraces her for the last time and drinks the poison, comparing his action to that of a pilot (sea captain) who smashes his ship upon the rocks.
- Consider carefully how Romeo should deliver his lines before he commits suicide. He is overcome by grief and believes there is nothing worth living for. Consider also how Juliet should convey her horror when she wakes to find Romeo dead. Yes, she kills herself, but look closely at what she says in lines 161–70. Is she as hysterical as she was before?
- For this final scene, keep in mind that Friar Laurence's deceptive plan has failed disastrously, resulting in a great deal of confusion, chaos and panic.



Aloof:	Apart
Obsequies:	Funeral rites
Intents:	Intentions or plans
Unhallowed:	Unblessed
Sepulchre:	Tomb



But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger 30
 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 further shall intend to do,
 By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint 35

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.

BALTHASAR I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you. 40

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.

[BALTHASAR hides]

ROMEO Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death, 45
 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 forces open the tomb]

PARIS *[Aside]* This is that banished 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 –

[PARIS steps out of hiding]

Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague!
 Can vengeance be pursued further than death? 55
 Condemnèd 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 desperate man;



33 **Pry:** Look into or interfere with.

33 **Jealous:** Suspicious.

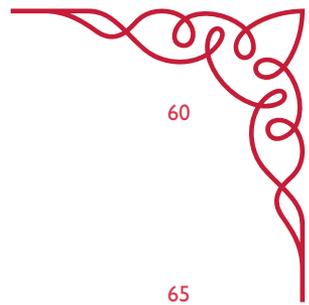
38 **Inexorable:** Merciless.

42 **Live, and be prosperous:** A blessing, wishing someone a successful life.

45 **Thou detestable maw:** Literally, 'You horrible throat' (Romeo intensely hates the tomb, which he compares with a throat that has greedily swallowed his beloved Juliet).

49 **Haughty:** Arrogant.

53 **Apprehend:** Arrest.



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,
 For I come hither armed against myself.
 Stay not, be gone; live, and hereafter say
 A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

60

65

PARIS I do defy thy conjurations,
 And apprehend thee for a felon here.

ROMEO Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

70

[ROMEO and PARIS fight]

PAGE *[Aside]* O Lord, they fight! I will go call the Watch.

[PAGE exits]

PARIS O, I am slain! *[Falls]* If thou be merciful,
 Open the tomb; lay me with Juliet.

[PARIS dies]

ROMEO In faith, I will. Let me peruse this face.
 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?
 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,
 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.

75

80

85

[ROMEO lays PARIS in the tomb, and addresses JULIET]

How oft when men are at the point of death
 Have they been merry! Which their keepers call



60–61 **Think upon these gone ... affright thee:** Romeo, who does not want to fight, tells Paris to think about the dead who surround them, and so be fearful.

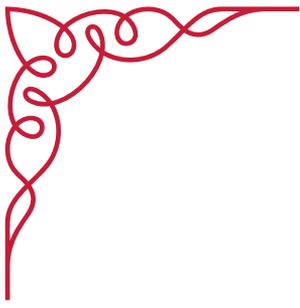
65 **Armed against myself:** Armed with the purpose of committing suicide.

68 **Conjurations:** Spells.

69 **Felon:** Criminal.

71 **The Watch:** The watchmen or guards.

74 **Peruse:** Look over or examine.



A lightning before death: O, how may I 90
 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
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks, 95
 And Death's pale flag is not advanced there –
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
 O, what more favour can I do to thee,
 Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain
 To sunder his that was thine enemy? 100
 Forgive me, cousin! – Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial Death is amorous,
 And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour? 105
 For fear of that, I still will stay with thee,
 And never from this palace of dim night
 Depart again. Here, here will I remain
 With worms that are thy chambermaids. O, here
 Will I set up my everlasting rest, 110
 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
 A dateless bargain to engrossing Death! 115
 Come, bitter conduct; come, unsavoury guide!
 Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
 The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!
 Here's to my love!

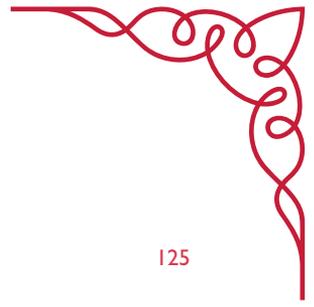
[ROMEO drinks the poison]

O true apothecary!
 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. 120

[ROMEO dies; at the other end of the churchyard, FRIAR LAURENCE enters, carrying a lantern and tools]



-
- 94 **Ensign:** Flag or banner.
 95 **Crimson:** Deep purplish-red colour.
 103 **Amorous:** Loving or romantic.
 104 **Lean abhorrèd monster:** Starved and much-hated monster.
 111–12 **Shake the yoke ... world-wearied flesh:** My body is sick of this life, and I will rid myself of the burden of cruel fate.
 115 **Dateless:** Eternal.
 118 **Bark:** A small ship.



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,
What torch is yond, that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,
It burneth in the Capels’ monument.

125

BALTHASAR It doth so, holy sir; and there’s my master,
One that you love.

FRIAR LAURENCE Who is it?

BALTHASAR Romeo.

FRIAR LAURENCE How long hath he been there?

BALTHASAR Full half an hour.

130

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.

FRIAR LAURENCE Stay, then; I’ll go alone. Fear comes upon me:
O, much I fear some ill unlucky thing.

135

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!

[FRIAR LAURENCE moves forward]

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?
What mean these masterless and gory swords
To lie discoloured by this place of peace?

140

[FRIAR LAURENCE enters the tomb]

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? What, Paris too?
And steeped in blood? Ah, what an unkind hour
Is guilty of this lamentable chance! –
The lady stirs.

145

[JULIET awakens]

JULIET O comfortable Friar! Where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be,
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

150

[A noise is heard within]



142 **Masterless:** Without a master or owner.

148 **Comfortable:** One who brings comfort.



FRIAR LAURENCE I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest
 Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep:
 A greater power than we can contradict
 Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.
 Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead, 155
 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; [*Noise is heard again*] I dare no longer stay.
 JULIET Go, get thee hence, for I will not away. 160

[*FRIAR LAURENCE exits*]

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:
 Haply some poison yet doth hang on them, 165
 To make me die with a restorative.

[*JULIET kisses ROMEO*]

Thy lips are warm.
 1ST WATCHMAN [*Within*] Lead, boy: which way?
 JULIET Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!

[*JULIET snatches ROMEO's dagger*]

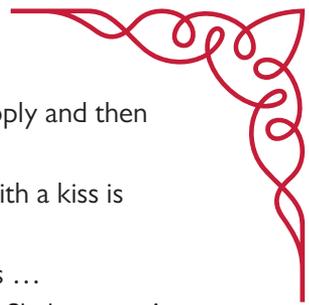
This is thy sheath; [*JULIET stabs herself*] there rust, and let me die. 170

[*JULIET falls on ROMEO's body and dies*]

- 
-
- 152 **Contagion:** Contamination.
 - 154 **Thwarted our intents:** Ruined our plans.
 - 163 **Churl:** Someone who lacks manners or is inconsiderate.
 - 165 **Haply:** Perhaps.
 - 166 **Restorative:** A healing medicine.



- 1 Do you believe Romeo kills Paris out of bitterness, or impatience, or perhaps something else? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- 2 Why do you think the word 'O' is repeated numerous times throughout Romeo's speech (lines 74–120)?
- 3 In lines 35–39, what do you think Romeo means when he compares himself with 'empty tigers' and 'the roaring sea'?
- 4 What technique is Shakespeare using when he has Romeo describe the churchyard as 'hungry' (line 36)?



- 5 Cross out the words in parts a and c that you think do not apply and then complete the three statements to explain your decisions.
- a Shakespeare's decision to have Romeo end his speech with a kiss is [effective/not effective] because ...
 - b Another way that Romeo could have ended his speech is ...
 - c My alternate ending would be [more/less] effective than Shakespeare's because ...
- 6 Create and complete a table similar to the one below.

Do you think Juliet had to commit suicide?	YES, because ...
	NO, because ...
What other options were open to her?	OPTION 1: OPTION 2: OPTION 3:
Why do you think she ignored these options?	



EXTEND

- 1 In his final soliloquy, Romeo comments at length on how Juliet is still beautiful, despite her having been dead for some time. Make a list of everything beautiful he notices about her. What is ironic about his description of her beauty?
- 2 Can you think why Shakespeare chooses to use so many short sentences or lines in this scene when:
 - a The Friar and Balthasar are speaking straight after Romeo's death?
 - b Friar Laurence discovers the bodies of Paris and Romeo?
- 3 Why do you think Shakespeare does not give Juliet a long speech (or soliloquy) at the end of her life, as he does for Romeo? Should he have done so?



DISCUSS

- 1 Do you think the Friar should have run off and left Juliet? Does this seem consistent with his character earlier in the play?
- 2 Which seems more responsible in this scene for Romeo and Juliet's death: fate or free will (personal choice)? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.



Zeffirelli and Luhrmann: DVD (*The lovers die*)



Zeffirelli and Luhrmann take quite different approaches to this tragic scene, especially when relating to the death of Romeo. While Zeffirelli follows the text more accurately, Luhrmann has Juliet coming back to consciousness while Romeo is talking – she actually opens her eyes and smiles at Romeo as he takes the poison, but he does not see her until it is too late.

- 1 How does Luhrmann build dramatic tension in this scene, when Juliet is waking up and Romeo is about to take the poison? Consider such aspects as camera work, music, lighting and editing (the sequence of the shots).
- 2 Do you think Luhrmann taking the liberty to change the text in this way is effective?
- 3 Does he add to the sense of tragedy at the end of the film?
- 4 How would you direct the end of the film?
- 5 What would you do to add to the sense of dramatic tension and tragedy?

Last word about imagery

In the questions for Act 5 Scene 1, we saw how imagery creates pictures in our minds simply by our choice of words. Specifically, we focused on how Shakespeare looks at the similarities between the plague and the poison of anger and bitterness – both are spreading throughout Verona, contaminating people and leading to tragic results.

Imagery of light / darkness

Look up the following lines of *Romeo and Juliet* and quote the sections where Romeo compares Juliet to light. Then rewrite the quotation in your own words.

- Q Act 1 Scene 5 (line 42) – what does Juliet mean to Romeo?
- Q Act 2 Scene 2 (lines 2–3) – what does Juliet mean to Romeo?
- Q Act 5 Scene 3 (lines 84–86) – what does Juliet mean to Romeo?
- Q Act 5 Scene 3 (lines 84–108) – in Romeo's eyes, how does Juliet contrast to the tomb's darkness?

Imagery of a sailing ship

This is the second time that Shakespeare has Romeo using imagery that compares his life to a journey on a sailing ship. Read Act 1 Scene 4 (lines 112–13) and Act 5 Scene 3 (lines 116–18).

- Q What does Romeo seem to be suggesting about the events of his life? Does he believe he has any choice or is he suggesting that things are beyond his control?

Thinking about fate

A tension that weaves its way through the story of *Romeo and Juliet* is the conflict between the role of fate and that of personal choice in the play's tragic outcome. Yet, similar to the paradox of 'brawling love' or 'loving hate' (see **Thinking about love**, page 132), it seems that both fate and free will share the blame for Romeo and Juliet's demise.

The central irony of the play is that the audience desperately wishes for a happy ending, even though the Chorus has already pronounced in the Prologue that the deaths of Romeo and Juliet are inevitable: Romeo and Juliet must die. It is their destiny and there are numerous references throughout the text to fate, the stars, fortune, the heavens or higher powers.

Q Read the following textual references and jot down how each refers in some way to fate.

- Prologue, line 6
- Act 1 Scene 4, lines 106–13
- Act 3 Scene 1, lines 125, 131–32
- Act 3 Scene 5, lines 54–56, 60–64
- Act 5 Scene 3, lines 153–54

Q In what way does this regular reference to fate increase the tension or sense of foreboding in the play?

Q Which conflicting argument or hypothesis below do you believe is supported by more evidence in the play? Provide evidence for your position.

FREE WILL (Personal Choice)

Ultimately, Romeo and Juliet contribute to their own destruction with their personal weakness of impatience and their acts of deception. They even try to ignore fate (Act 5 Scene 1, line 24; Act 5 Scene 3, lines 109–18) and choose to commit suicide.

CONFLICT

FATE

Ultimately, Romeo and Juliet are the innocent victims of forces beyond their own control. They are 'star-crossed lovers'.

As you read the final pages of the play, you might like to note carefully how Shakespeare masterfully links the ideas of love and fate, seen especially when the Prince condemns the actions of Romeo's and Juliet's parents (Act 5 Scene 3, lines 292–93). Is he blaming fate? Romeo and Juliet? Or something else?



Act 5 Scene 3 (Part 2)

CHARACTERS

Friar Laurence
Prince
Balthasar
Montague
Capulet
Lady Capulet
1ST, 2ND and 3RD Watchmen
Page
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]

IN A NUTSHELL

The Prince, Montague, and Lord and Lady Capulet arrive, and the Friar is caught and forced to explain what has happened. The two families realise their part in the tragedy and finally make peace.

Before you read

- You might like to consider both families' grief as they arrive at the grotesque scene. Gone are all traces of bitterness or anger, haste or impatience. All characters realise the error of their ways and the two families make their peace with each other.



Perforce: By force
Dire: Disastrous
Privy: A witness to something
Aught: Anything
Discords: Disagreements or conflicts

A churchyard, in it a tomb belonging to the Capulets.

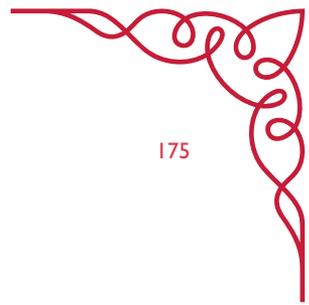
[WATCHMEN and the PAGE of PARIS enter the tomb]

PAGE This is the place: there, where the torch doth burn.
1ST WATCHMAN The ground is bloody – search about the churchyard:
Go, some of you; whoe'er you find attach –

[Some WATCHMEN exit]



173 **Whoe'er you find attach:** Arrest anyone you find.



Pitiful sight! Here lies the County slain,
 And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,
 Who here hath lain these two days buried –
 Go, tell the Prince; run to the Capulets;
 Raise up the Montagues; some others search –

175

[Other WATCHMEN exit]

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie;
 But the true ground of all these piteous woes
 We cannot without circumstance descry.

180

[Other WATCHMEN enter, with BALTHASAR]

2ND WATCHMAN Here's Romeo's man; we found him in the churchyard.
 1ST WATCHMAN Hold him in safety, till the Prince come hither.

[Other WATCHMEN re-enter, with FRIAR LAURENCE]

3RD WATCHMAN Here is a friar that trembles, sighs and weeps;
 We took this mattock and this spade from him,
 As he was coming from this churchyard side.
 1ST WATCHMAN A great suspicion: stay the Friar too.

185

[The PRINCE and his Attendants enter the tomb]

PRINCE What misadventure is so early up,
 That calls our person from our morning's rest?

[CAPULET, LADY CAPULET and others enter the tomb]

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?

190

1ST WATCHMAN Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain,
 And Romeo dead, and Juliet, dead before,
 Warm and new killed.

195

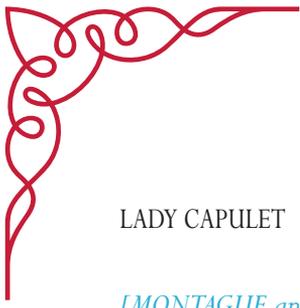
PRINCE Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.
 1ST WATCHMAN Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man,
 With instruments upon them, fit to open
 These dead men's tombs.

200

CAPULET O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!



- 180 **True ground:** The reason for these events.
- 181 **We cannot without circumstance descry:** We can't understand without further details.
- 187 **Stay the Friar:** Keep the Friar here (for questioning).
- 195 **Sovereign:** Ruler, in this case the Prince.



This dagger hath mista'en (for, lo, his house
Is empty on the back of Montague)
And it mis-sheathèd in my daughter's bosom! 205
LADY CAPULET O me! This sight of death is as a bell,
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

[MONTAGUE and others enter the tomb]

PRINCE Come, Montague; for thou art early up,
To see thy son and heir more early down.

MONTAGUE Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight: 210
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?

PRINCE Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while, 220
Till we can clear these ambiguities,
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;
And then will I be general of your woes,
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, 225
Yet most suspected, as the time and place
Doth make against me of this direful murder;
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemnèd 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.



203–05 **This dagger hath ... in my daughter's bosom:** Capulet observes that the dagger is in the wrong (mistaken) place, being in Juliet's body rather than its sheath ('his house').

210 **My liege:** My lord (title of respect).

214–15 **O thou untaught ... father to a grave:** O ignorant boy, what bad manners you have, to die before your father.

217 **Ambiguities:** Unclear or confusing matters.

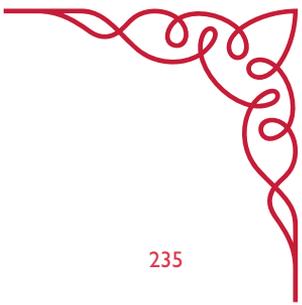
218–22 **And know their spring ... parties of suspicion:** The Prince urges caution until everyone knows the origin of the unfortunate events they are discussing. He also indicates that those to blame could be punished with death.

223 **I am the greatest:** I am the one most responsible.

225 **Direful:** Dreadful.

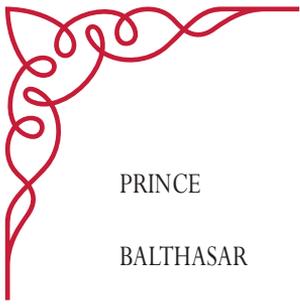
226–27 **Both to impeach and purge / Myself:** To both charge myself with and clear myself from (wrongdoing).

229 **My short date of breath:** My short (remaining) life.



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 dooms-day, whose untimely death
 Banished the new-made bridegroom from the city, 235
 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,
 And, with wild looks, bid me devise some mean 240
 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
 As I intended, for it wrought on her 245
 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.
 But he which bore my letter, Friar John, 250
 Was stayed by accident, and yesternight
 Returned my letter back. Then all alone,
 At the prefixèd hour of her waking,
 Came I to take her from her kindred's vault,
 Meaning to keep her closely at my cell, 255
 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.
 She wakes, and I entreated her come forth, 260
 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.
 All this I know; and to the marriage 265
 Her Nurse is privy; and, if aught in this
 Miscarried by my fault, let my old life

-
- 
- 234 **Doomsday:** Final or judgement day.
 236 **Pined:** Grieved.
 238 **Betrothed:** Promised to in marriage.
 245 **Wrought on her:** Worked on her.
 266 **The Nurse is privy:** The Nurse is aware of this.



Be sacrificed, some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.

PRINCE We still have known thee for a holy man – 270
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.
This letter he early bid me give his father, 275
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? –
Sirrah, what made your master in this place? 280

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;
And then I ran away to call the Watch. 285

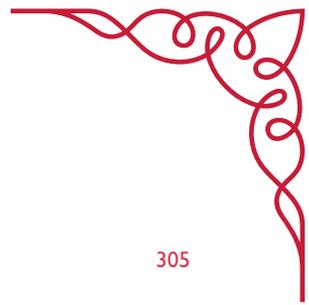
PRINCE This letter doth make good the Friar’s words,
Their course of love, the tidings of her death:
And here he writes that he did buy a poison
Of a poor ’pothecary, and therewithal
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet – 290
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.
And I for winking at your discords too
Have lost a brace of kinsmen: all are punished. 295

CAPULET O brother Montague, give me thy hand:
This is my daughter’s jointure, for no more
Can I demand.

MONTAGUE But I can give thee more,
For I will raise her statue in pure gold,
That while Verona by that name is known, 300



-
- 269 **The rigour of severest law:** The harshest punishment possible under the law.
 - 270 **Still:** Always.
 - 286 **Doth make good the Friar’s words:** Proves the Friar’s words to be true.
 - 289 **Therewithal:** With that.
 - 292 **Scourge:** Curse or punishment.
 - 294 **Winking at your discords:** Overlooking or turning a blind eye to your conflicts.
 - 295 **A brace of kinsmen:** A pair of family members (i.e. Paris and Mercutio).
 - 297 **Jointure:** Dowry (money or inheritance saved up for marriage).



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!

PRINCE A glooming peace this morning with it brings; 305
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
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo. 310

[All exit]



304 **Poor sacrifices of our enmity:** They died to pay the penalty for our hatred towards each other.
308 **Pardoned:** Forgiven or let off.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do you think Shakespeare considers it necessary for the Friar to retell the whole story in this scene?
- 2 How do the deaths of Romeo and Juliet affect their families?
- 3 Is this, in your opinion, a happy ending? Explain.
- 4 Read the Prologue again. Do you think Shakespeare 'spoils' the ending of Romeo and Juliet by telling us what is going to happen?
- 5 Do you think it is effective that Shakespeare ends his play with a rhyming poem? Why or why not?



EXTEND

Revisit the questions for Act 2 Scene 3 and look at the information in **Thinking about characters' fatal flaws** on page 77. Create a flow chart to show the examples in the play of characters' base emotions, deception, misunderstandings and tragic results.



DISCUSS

- 1 How believable do you think is the reconciliation between the Capulet and Montague families?
- 2 If you were given the task of directing a stage production of the final scene, how would you direct the Friar's retelling of the play's tragic events (lines 229–69) to maintain the audience's interest? In your response, consider the specific theatrical devices of lighting, blocking and sound (music and vocal delivery).

H

For never was a story of more woe...

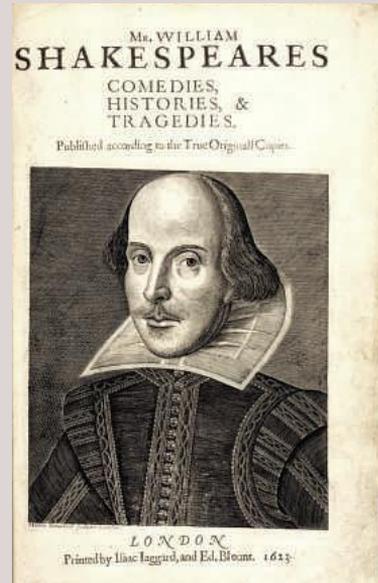
Romeo and Juliet as tragedy

What we now call the First Folio was published in 1623, a thick book entitled *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*. *Romeo and Juliet* was included in the section marked 'Tragedies', along with such famous plays as *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. The book did not offer a definition of tragedy; many of its histories include tragic elements and many of the tragedies include plenty of historical detail, and all of Shakespeare's plays include some comic elements. So, what did the editors mean by tragedy?

The term tragedy generally suggests an unhappy ending, and comedy a happy outcome. While some of Shakespeare's plays, such as *Othello* and *King Lear*, have extremely bleak and tragic endings, it could be argued that Shakespearean tragedies such as *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* are not totally tragic (given that the respective kingdoms of Scotland and Denmark are liberated from the rule of usurping tyrants). *Romeo and Juliet* could be viewed in this way, for while the young couple die tragically, the feud between the two households, which had been raging for generations, comes to a peaceful end. Almost from the play's first performance, critics questioned whether or not the play was really a tragedy, due largely to the role of chance or fate in the plot, as opposed to a flaw in the central character.

In addition to an unhappy ending, some elements are common to the majority of Shakespeare's tragedies:

1. Shakespeare's tragic heroes (generally men) tend to be elevated above the common man by rank or ability.
2. The tragic hero is generally alienated from his own society by his experiences or through the choices that he has made.
3. The downfall of the hero tends to affect the whole community.
4. The tragic hero tends to come to a recognition of his problematic choices or the consequences of his destructive actions, and from this he draws some meaning of potentially universal significance.



Title page of the First Folio



From the late-seventeenth century, Shakespeare's original script of *Romeo and Juliet* was changed significantly and performed with a happy ending in which the lovers both survived. In the past two centuries, theatre companies have generally returned to Shakespeare's original script. All over the world the names Romeo and Juliet are famous as representing lovers. The play's tragic ending seems to have added to the characters' iconic status.

- Q Remind yourself of the flaws in the characters of Romeo and Juliet. What are these fatal flaws and how have they contributed to the deaths of Romeo and Juliet?
- Q To what extent does *Romeo and Juliet* adhere to the Shakespearean model for tragedy proposed on the previous page?
- Q Do you think the ending of *Romeo and Juliet* is overwhelmingly bleak, and therefore tragic, or do you think the reconciliation of the two families makes the play more comic (happy)?
- Q Would you prefer the play to have a happy ending? Why or why not?



General activities

Oral presentations / performance

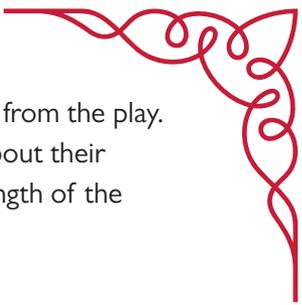
- 1 The following scenes are particularly appropriate for performance:
 - Act 1 Scene 1 (The opening brawl)
 - Act 1 Scene 5 (Romeo and Juliet meeting at the masked ball)
 - Act 2 Scene 2 (Balcony scene)
 - Act 3 Scene 1 (Mercutio's death)
 - Act 3 Scene 5 (The lovers part)
 - Act 5 Scene 3 (The deaths of Romeo and Juliet).

In a group, practise and perform one of these scenes, making sure you consider voice, costume, sound and staging.

- 2 Make your own soundtrack for a film version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Choose at least eight songs that you feel are appropriate for different scenes in the film. Specify which eight scenes you have chosen and write at least 50 words on each song to explain why it is appropriate for that particular scene. Include at least four of the scenes listed in Question 1.

You may choose to perform this as an oral presentation, playing short excerpts from each song, explaining your choices and describing how the music would be used. Would it introduce the scene, conclude it or play throughout?

- 3 Explain what your emphasis would be if you were given the chance to direct your own version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Cover, in particular, your choice of costume for eight of the main characters. Explain what sort of atmosphere you would look to create through the set design.
- 4 Record a scene from the play as part of a radio play.
- 5 Perform a scene from the play as a group or perform one of the soliloquies or monologues on your own.
- 6 Produce a one-minute trailer advertising your film version of *Romeo and Juliet*. This can take the form of either a television or a film advertisement. Make sure you consider music, sound effects and voiceover.

- 
- 7 Set up a chat-show style interview with one of the characters from the play. Discuss what happened to the character and what they felt about their experiences. Make sure you stay in character for the entire length of the interview. Choose from:
 - Romeo
 - Juliet
 - Mercutio
 - Tybalt
 - Friar Laurence
 - Nurse
 - Lord Capulet.
 - 8 Cover one of the play's scenes as a two-minute news story. This can take the form of either a video or a radio news story. Make sure it captures your audience's attention and include some interviews.
 - 9 Put the Friar on trial for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. This will be a group oral presentation involving a minimum of four students who will take the roles of the prosecution, the defence, the Friar and a judge.
 - 10 Present a talk to your classmates entitled: 'What's so great about Shakespeare?' Refer to *Romeo and Juliet* in your talk.

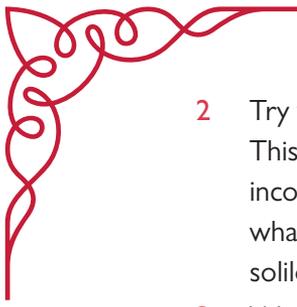
Questions for debate

Debate one of the following topics. The Affirmative Team will agree with the statement, while the Negative Team will disagree. Both teams should consist of three members who each speak for two minutes.

- 1 The play *Romeo and Juliet* proves that old people are always right.
- 2 Romeo and Juliet are the only ones to blame for their own deaths.

Creative writing

- 1 Write a school report as a class teacher for two of the following students: Romeo; Tybalt; Mercutio; Benvolio.
Make sure you include their attitude, behaviour, studies and extracurricular interests. Reports should be a minimum of 100 words each. Use formal language for this task.



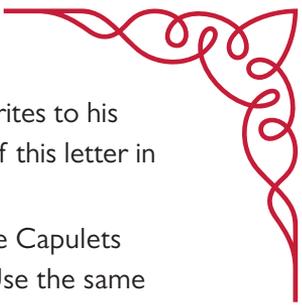
- 2 Try writing part of one of the scenes as a chapter from a modern novel. This will mean that you have to fill in some of the details of setting, incorporate dialogue into the flow of your writing, and give some idea of what characters are thinking, even in places where they do not use a soliloquy. Make sure you use modern language.
- 3 Write a short interview script in which a character reflects on their part in the tragedy and how they feel about events one year on. Choose one of the following characters:
 - Capulet
 - Lady Capulet
 - The Nurse
 - Benvolio.

You might like to present this using ICT (PowerPoint, Flash or a website).

- 4 Write the letter from Tybalt challenging Romeo to a duel. Before you write the letter make sure you carefully consider the kind of language Tybalt uses (minimum of 150 words).
- 5 Write a 300–400 word newspaper article on one of the following events from the play:
 - the fight at the beginning of the play (Act 1 Scene 1)
 - the Capulet party (Act 1 Scene 5)
 - the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt (Act 3 Scene 1)
 - Juliet's 'death' on the eve of her wedding (Act 4 Scene 5)
 - the discovery of Romeo and Juliet's deaths (Act 5 Scene 3).

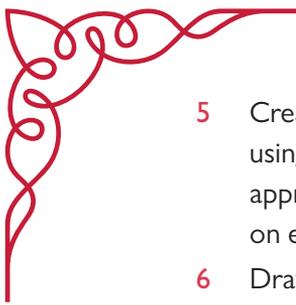
Make sure your headline and your opening sentence grab the reader's attention. Also, insert some quotes from the play or create fictitious interviews with characters. You might like to present this using ICT (PowerPoint, Flash or a website).

- 6 Create a blog in which you write some entries from one character's point of view at different stages in the play, responding to the events that have occurred. Add other characters' comments to your character's blog.
- 7 Think of three alternative titles for *Romeo and Juliet* and write a few sentences on why each of these titles would effectively market the play or film to a modern audience.

- 
- 8 The audience never hears the content of the letter Romeo writes to his father towards the end of the play. Write your own version of this letter in modern English (minimum of 250 words).
 - 9 Script a conversation that occurs between the Nurse and the Capulets after the play in which she explains her part in the tragedy. Use the same conventions you have observed Shakespeare using throughout the play. Make sure, for example, that you begin a new line each time a different character speaks.
 - 10 If you could give Mercutio some different final lines, what would they be? Write a short passage that begins with Benvolio's line: 'What, art thou hurt?' (Act 3 Scene 1, line 82). Use the same conventions you have observed Shakespeare using throughout the play. Make sure, for example, that you begin a new line each time a different character speaks.
 - 11 Read Romeo's six-line speech that begins, 'O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright' (Act 1 Scene 5, line 42). In this speech Romeo describes Juliet's beauty as that of a swan compared with ugly crows. Try writing three rhyming couplets that make a similar comparison between something ugly and something beautiful.
 - 12 Although Shakespeare writes a final soliloquy for Romeo as he dies, there is no such speech for Juliet. Try writing a soliloquy for her, using Shakespearean language (10–20 lines). Before you begin, read through Romeo's final soliloquy several times.

Illustration

- 1 Draw a labelled scientific diagram of Queen Mab and her carriage. Consult Mercutio's speech in Act 1 Scene 4 for exact details.
- 2 Design a poster for your own film version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Include quotes and some phrases that will catch the viewer's attention, and a cast list.
- 3 Present one of the scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* as a comic book or comic strip. Or, create a flipbook that presents the key characters and events of the play.
- 4 Create a Facebook page for one of the characters of the play. You could choose, for example, Romeo, Juliet, Mercutio or Tybalt. Make sure you include your character's interests, their interpretation of some of the events of the play, comments from some of their friends and so on. See if you can include some links to appropriate songs or music.

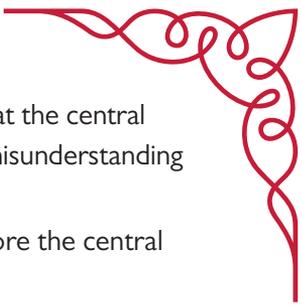
- 
- 5 Create a PowerPoint or Flash presentation on five characters in the play, using key quotes, a background that you feel is representative of them, an appropriate symbol for them and some background music. Write 50 words on each character, explaining why you made these creative choices.
 - 6 Draw or paint a map of Verona that includes the key settings of the play.

Questions for discussion

- 1 Does Shakespeare portray the young lovers sympathetically in *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 2 Does *Romeo and Juliet* promote the message that we are powerless over our own destiny?
- 3 Shakespeare was probably still in his twenties when he wrote *Romeo and Juliet*. Do you think his play is 'ageist' (discriminating against various ages), in that it portrays parents, the middle-aged and the elderly in an unsympathetic way?
- 4 What do you think might have caused the family feud between the Montagues and Capulets in the first place?
- 5 Are Romeo's feelings for Juliet different from those he had for Rosaline? Why?
- 6 Was it real love for Romeo and Juliet or were they simply immature adolescents?
- 7 Who is the hero of *Romeo and Juliet* and why?
- 8 What do you think life would be like 15 years later if Romeo and Juliet had lived?
- 9 Do you think *Romeo and Juliet* shows us the need to control our emotions?
- 10 Is *Romeo and Juliet* more or less interesting than many love stories we see in films or on television today?

Essay questions

- 1 Who or what is to blame for the tragic outcome of *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 2 To what extent are the two central characters responsible for the tragic outcome of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 3 Hiding the truth has both positive and negative consequences. How true is this in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 4 How important are the roles of the minor characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?

- 
- 5 In *Romeo and Juliet*, how effectively does Shakespeare show that the central characters' fatal flaws spread by means of deception, lead to misunderstanding and ultimately result in tragedy?
 - 6 Show how Shakespeare uses a number of techniques to explore the central ideas of his play, *Romeo and Juliet*.
 - 7 How successfully does love overcome all obstacles in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
 - 8 'Above all, it is Shakespeare's language that successfully engages the reader and communicates ideas.' Discuss.
 - 9 Present a case against the view that Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has no relevance to the twenty-first century.
 - 10 To what extent is *Romeo and Juliet* a celebration of love?
 - 11 How does Shakespeare capture the interest of the audience in the opening act of *Romeo and Juliet*?
 - 12 Discuss the role of fate in *Romeo and Juliet*.
 - 13 '*Romeo and Juliet* is not really a tragedy.' Discuss.



APPENDIX 1

To the teacher

It will not be possible for your students to attempt every activity in this book, but we have given you a wide range of activities and questions so that you can determine what best suits the particular needs of your class. Listed below are some of the features of this book and a brief explanation of how they might be useful in your lessons.

We have used a range of icons to help you and your students identify different parts of the text.

1. Understanding the narrative

Before you begin reading the text, it is important that your students have a sound grasp of the story. It is a good idea for the class to read through the **Act summaries** on pages 18–19, and complete the **Quick questions** and **Freeze-frames** activity on pages 19–20.

At the beginning of each scene, we have given a brief outline of what happens, called **In a nutshell**.

2. Reading the text

While it is likely you will read most of the play as a class, you should also read some scenes in smaller groups, and you might like to perform some as well. We have suggested which scenes are particularly appropriate for performance in the first activity of **Oral presentations / performance**, page 198.

At the beginning of each scene we have listed the characters in order of importance. It is helpful if you take a major role and delegate the other major parts to your most confident readers. In some scenes it is also helpful if one student reads the stage directions, and we have indicated where this is the case with the direction [Optional: Narrator to read stage directions].

Where possible, try to delegate parts the day before you perform a scene so that students have an opportunity to look over and perhaps practise their parts. Encourage students to read loudly and clearly, and be forthcoming with your praise.

Shakespeare's language (pages 9–13) provides some basic reading tips and explanations of key language features. We recommend that you look at the reading tips before you begin reading, or explain them to your class. It is important that you do not overwhelm your students with too many concepts in a



short period of time. Introduce concepts such as iambic pentameter after your students have begun to gain an intuitive sense for the language.

We have also provided general introductions on **Elizabethan England**, **Shakespeare** himself, **sources** of the play and the **settings**. These will help provide some background and a context in which to read the play. The notes on Elizabethan England and the theatre are the most important of these introductions. You could read these as a class or ask students to read them in their own time.

It can be very helpful to use a professional recording of the play. You can use this sometimes as a supplement to the class reading and also to reinforce important scenes. If you have more than one recording, it can be useful to compare interpretations.

There is, of course, no substitute for seeing the text performed as a live production, and we recommend you have actors or performance companies visit your school.

3. Understanding the text

A summary of **Important vocabulary** at the front of the book (page 14) lists 14 key words that recur frequently in *Romeo and Juliet*. Students should try to learn the meanings and pronunciation of these words.



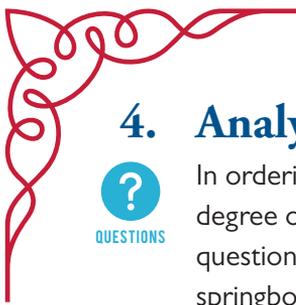
We have also included a short vocabulary list at the beginning of each scene, indicated by this icon. All of these words, plus some others from the **Text notes**, are printed in the **Vocabulary list** on pages 211–13. In this way you can find a word without having to remember where it was first introduced.

The **Before you read** section, at the beginning of each scene, provides reading tips and anticipates problems students may have. Phrases and words that are more secondary to the understanding of a scene are printed as **Text notes** at the end of each scene. In most cases, these notes provide an interpretation of a specific word or phrase and, in this way, can be limiting. We would encourage students not to make these their first point of reference but rather to use them, where necessary, after they have read through the scene and thought about it themselves.



Finally, a number of **History Boxes** provide useful historical information on Elizabethan England. Most of this information we have included to provide an historical context for specific scenes. Other information has been provided in order to fire the students' curiosity.

We have provided a **Shakespeare reading list** on page 210 in case you wish to read more about Shakespeare and the Elizabethan world.



4. Analysing the text



In ordering the **Questions**, we have attempted to balance chronology against degree of difficulty. For some scenes you might look to save time by dividing the questions among different groups in the class, or you may simply use them as a springboard for discussion.



We have also included **Extend** questions that will allow some students, or the entire class, to analyse a scene in greater depth. It is important that all students engage with the technical aspects of the play and, for this reason, we have also included questions relating to technique among the general questions.



Finally, some questions have been designed for general discussion of personal responses to the text. These are indicated by the **Discuss** icon.

A word about ...

Shakespeare's themes and techniques highlight particular ideas and devices used by Shakespeare throughout this play. We recommend that students first read these boxes themselves and that you then explain the concept using the examples.

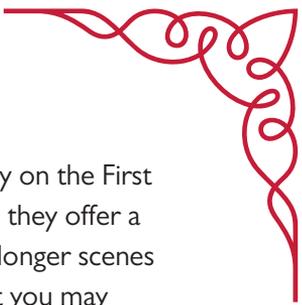
5. The films (Press play)



It is useful to show excerpts from both the Zeffirelli (1968) and Luhrmann (1996) films to reinforce students' understanding of key scenes, and these can provide an alternative to reading some scenes if you are running short of time. The **Press play** activities provide opportunities for students to consider different interpretations of the text. Moreover, the questions are often useful for sparking further discussion. We recommend watching the Luhrmann film in its entirety after you have read through the text.

6. Other activities

There is deliberate overlap between the **Questions for debate**, **Questions for discussion** and **Essay questions** (pages 199–203). How you use these will depend largely on the type of class you have. We have generally found that it is better to read through the play in its entirety before beginning debates, essays or creative activities. You may, however, like to break up your reading of the play with one of the **Oral presentations / performance** or **Creative writing** activities after Act 2 or Act 3.



7. A note about the text

We have based the text for this edition of *Romeo and Juliet* primarily on the First Folio but have also used the Quarto versions in a few places where they offer a more accessible version of the text. We have divided some of the longer scenes into two parts to make them more digestible for your students, but you may choose to ignore these divisions. Some of the stage directions and the spelling have been modernised in line with standard editorial practices for preparing editions of Shakespeare's plays. Modern punctuation conventions are followed throughout with the exception of the dash (–), which we have used to indicate an interruption in the flow or the direction of the conversation; for example, when a character switches from soliloquy to addressing another character on stage or when a character switches from addressing one character to addressing another (see **Shakespeare's language** on pages 9–13 for a more detailed explanation).

8. Finally ...

No-one could reasonably expect to understand every phrase or allusion in Shakespeare's plays and your students should not expect to either. Making this clear from the outset will foster the confidence in students to talk about what they do understand and what they do know: to see the text as a glass half full, rather than a glass half empty. Moreover, this will encourage students to appreciate the subtleties and resonances of the language and to truly understand that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our pedagogy.

Shakespeare and the language of love

Shakespeare has always been considered a great love poet. When the theatres were closed down in the early 1590s due to the plague, he spent his time writing the narrative love poem *Venus and Adonis*, which soon became a bestseller. He also wrote many romantic sonnets which were concerned with the theme of love. Shakespeare employs particularly romantic language in some of these sonnets. For example, Sonnet 18 opens with the famous lines:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

Shakespeare was also sceptical about the excesses of this kind of language. Here are some lines from Sonnet 130:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red.
...
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

Despite these unflattering comparisons, Shakespeare concludes the sonnet on a positive note:

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As she belied with false compare.

(See the next page for the full text of these two sonnets.)

Almost all of Shakespeare's comedies, including *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are concerned primarily with the theme of romantic love. It is also a major theme in some of Shakespeare's tragedies, such as *Othello* and, of course, *Romeo and Juliet*. Many of Shakespeare's characters use similes and metaphors, hyperbole, classical allusions and rhyme to describe their beloved (the one they love) or the depth of their love. Often though, Shakespeare's characters, when they are most genuine, will speak in unadorned blank verse or prose. We see both of these kinds of speeches in *Romeo and Juliet*. There were dating manuals in Shakespeare's day, giving men advice on how to court or woo. It was common for an educated man to write a sonnet for his beloved or at least to know the right things to say. For this reason, girls had to be on their guard against suitors who sounded too slick. In Act 2 Scene 2, lines 107–11, Juliet questions Romeo's poetic oaths:



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,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb,
 Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Juliet's speeches of love are more direct and unadorned than Romeo's and ultimately she speaks the more original love poetry.

Two Shakespearean sonnets

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red.
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go:
 My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.



APPENDIX 3

A Shakespeare reading list

- Alexander, Catherine MS, *Shakespeare: The Life, the Works, the Treasures*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2007.
- Bate, Jonathan, *The Genius of Shakespeare*, Picador, London, 1997.
- Crystal, David & Ben, *Shakespeare's Words*, Penguin, London, 2002.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, Norton, London, 2004.
- Greer, Germaine, *Shakespeare: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.
- Gurr, Andrew, *The Shakespearean Stage*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992.
- Hussey, SS, *The Literary Language of Shakespeare*, Longman, Harlow, 1982.
- Kay, Dennis, *Shakespeare: His Life, Work and Era*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1991.
- Kermode, Frank, *Shakespeare's Language*, Penguin, London, 2001.
- Kermode, Frank, *The Age of Shakespeare*, Phoenix, London, 2005.
- Rodenburg, Patsy, *Reading Shakespeare*, Methuen, London, 2002.
- Sandler, Robert (ed.), *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1986.
- Shapiro, James, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, Faber & Faber, London, 2005.
- Tillyard, EMW, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, Vintage Books, New York, 1960.
- Wells, Stanley, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.
- Wells, Stanley, *Shakespeare & Co.*, Penguin, London, 2007.
- Wilson, Jean, *The Shakespeare Legacy*, Bramley Books, Godalming, 1995.
- Wood, Michael, *In Search of Shakespeare*, directed by David Wallace, Maya Vision International, 2004.

Vocabulary list



Abhor: Hate

Abroad: Around the place

Absolved: Forgiven

Adieu: Affectionate French word for
goodbye

Adversary: Enemy

Adversity: Trouble

Alack: An expression of regret,
like 'Oh, dear'

Aloof: Apart

Amorous: Loving or romantic

An: If

Anon: Soon, like saying 'In a minute'

Antic: Fantastic or old-fashioned
(antique)

Apace: Quickly

Apprehend: Arrest

Aqua vitae: Brandy (a literal translation
would be 'water of life')

Aught: Anything

Augmenting: Adding to

Ay: Yes (pronounced eye)

Ay me: An exclamation of weariness or
anguish, like a sigh

Bark: A small ship

Bawd: Prostitute

Bedaubed: Covered or plastered

Befits: Suits

Begot: Born

Beguile: Deceive

Behests: Requests or commands

Besech: Request or beg

Beshrew: Curse

Betrothed: Promised to someone in
marriage

Bier: The stand for a coffin

Bill: A long-handled weapon with an
axe head

By and by: Soon

By my troth: Upon my word

By'r lady: By our Lady (the virgin Mary)
– an exclamation

Canker: A cancer or infection

Challenge: Invitation (or challenge) to
a duel

Chaste: Being sexually pure or
avoiding sex

Chastity: Sexual purity or avoidance
of sex

Chide: Tell someone off or criticise them

Choler: Anger

Churl: Someone inconsiderate or lacking
manners

Civil: Public

Cleft: A substantial gap or crack

Closet: Private room

Conceit: Thought; imagination

Conjurations: Spells

Courtier: Someone who serves in a
royal court

Dire: Disastrous

Discords: Disagreements or conflicts

Discourse: Speech or conversation

Disposition: Nature, temperament or
feeling

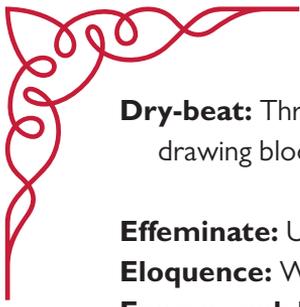
Dissemble: Deceive

Doff: Put aside or take off

Doomsday: The end of the world

Dotting: Childish or silly infatuation;
puppy love

Dram: A small amount (1.77 grams)



Dry-beat: Thrash (someone) without drawing blood

Effeminate: Unmanly

Eloquence: Words of beauty and skill

Enamoured: Delighted by

Enmity: Hatred or a state of being enemies

Entreat: Beg somebody for something

Ere: Before (pronounced *air*)

Exile: Being banished (thrown or locked out) from a place

Fain: Gladly

Fi: An expression of annoyance or disapproval or even disgust

Foe: Enemy

Forfeit: Loss

Forsooth: It is true, truly

Fray: Fight

Gall: Poison

Garish: Annoyingly bright

Ghostly: Spiritual

Good den: Good evening

Grace: Goodness

Happy: Lucky

Haste: Great speed

Hence: Away from here

Henceforth: From now on

Hie: Hurry or go quickly

Humour: Mood or behaviour

Idolatry: Worship (of something other than God)

Import: Importance

Infection: Being contaminated by the plague

Intents: Intentions or plans

Jacks: Men or scoundrels

Jocund: Light-hearted or joyful

Jointure: Marriage dowry or payment

Kinsman / Kin / Kindred: Relatives

Knave: Troublemaker

Lamentable: Extremely sad, worth crying over

Learnèd: Knowledgeable

List: Like, wish

Lusty: Full of sexual energy; or strong and vigorous

Maidenhead: A woman's virginity

Marred: Ruined or made bad

Marry: An expression of surprise or frustration, referring to the Virgin Mary

Mattock: A tool used for digging

Measure: A dance

Mewed: Locked up or confined

Moderately: With restraint or not in an extreme manner

Mutiny: Violence

Nought: Nothing

Obsequies: Funeral rites

Orisons: Prayers

Paramour: Lover

Pardoned: Forgiven or let off

Partisan: Long spear

Perchance: Maybe

Perforce: By force

Pernicious: Destructive

Philosophy: Practical wisdom or advice

Physic: Medicine or remedy

Pilot: A sea captain



Portentous: Serious, a sign that something bad is going to happen

Prates: Talks nonsense

Predominant: Most common

Privy: Witness to something

Procure: Get or obtain something

Profane: Corrupt

Prologue: Introduction

Quarrel: A fight

Rancour: Hatred and bitterness

Rapier: Long, sharp two-edged sword

Repose: Rest

Rest you merry: A way of saying goodbye, similar to 'God bless'

Revel: Celebrate

Salutation: Greetings

Saucy: Insolent

Sepulchre: Tomb

Shrift: Confession

Shroud: A burial cloth

Sirrah: A form of address similar to sir, but often used to address people of lower social rank or position (e.g. a servant)

Slander: False accusation

Sojourn: Journey or rest

Solace: Comfort

Solemnity: An occasion of some importance that people celebrate, such as a party or wedding

Suit: Offer of marriage

Swounded: Swooned or fainted

Tardy: Late

Tarry: Wait around

Thou: You

Thrice: Three times

Thy: Your

Tush: Usually a soft rebuke, something like 'don't be ridiculous'

Tyrant: A cruel leader

Unhallowed: Unblessed, evil

Valiant: Noble or heroic

Valour: Bravery

Vexed: Troubled

Vial: Small bottle

Vices: Bad qualities

Villain: A wicked person, rascal or rogue (used as a harsh insult)

Virtues: Good qualities

Visage: Face

Visor: Mask

Wanting: Lacking

Wench: A girl or a woman

Wherefore: Why

Wit: Sense or intelligence

Woo: Try to win the heart of someone

Yon / Yond / Yonder: Over there

'Zounds: Short for 'By His [Christ's] wounds' (a swear word or blasphemy in Elizabethan times)

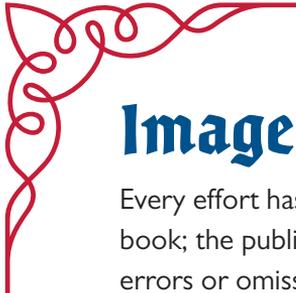


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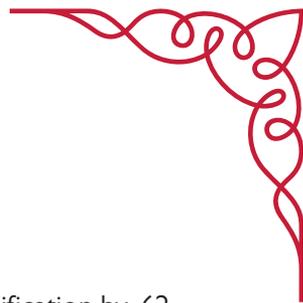
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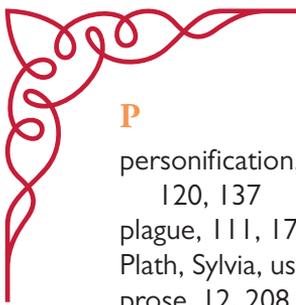
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