

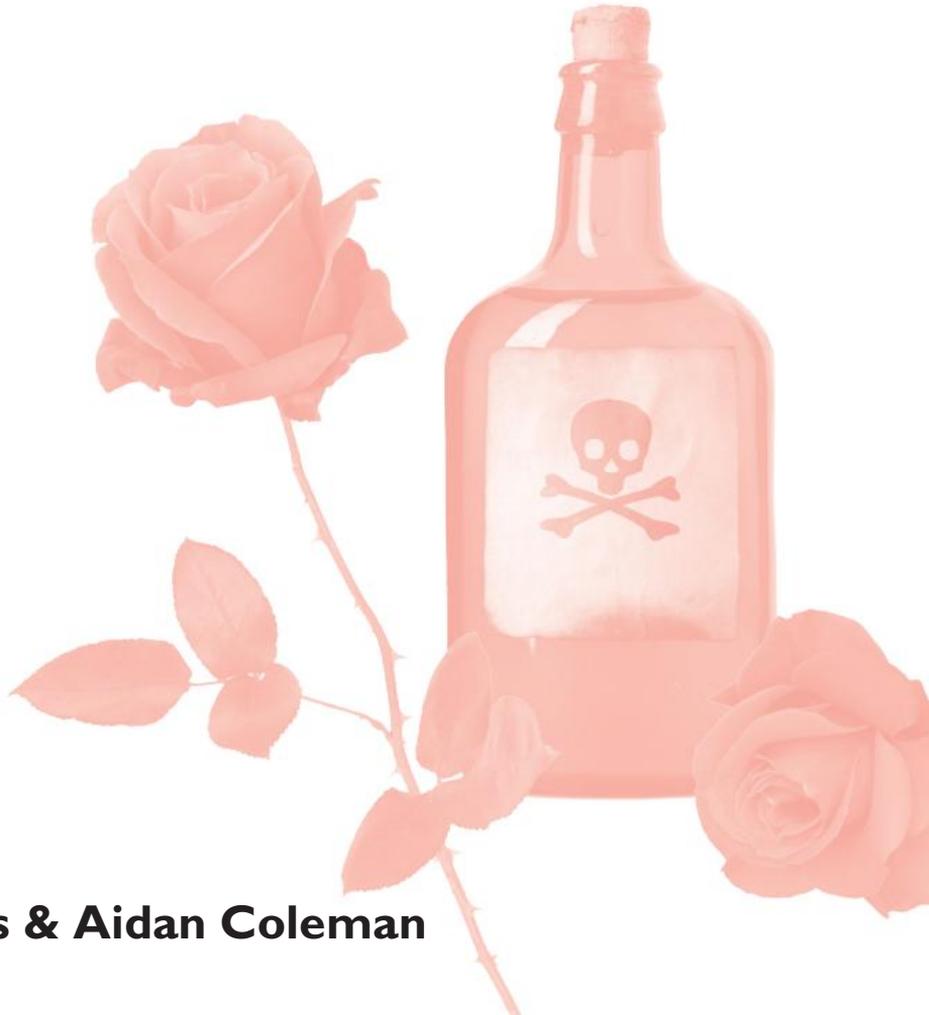
**insight** SHAKESPEARE PLAYS



# Romeo & Juliet

The Abridged Play

**William Shakespeare**



**Shane Barnes & Aidan Coleman**

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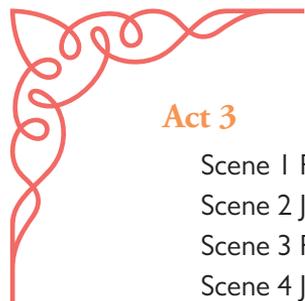
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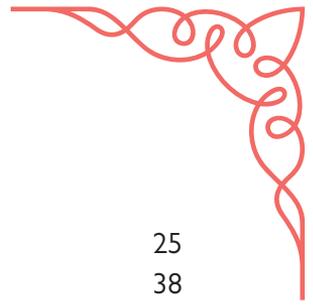
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# Introduction

## Who was Shakespeare?



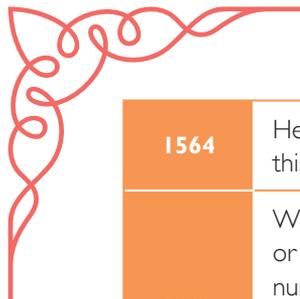
*The Chandos Portrait of William Shakespeare*

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 his life until some 50 years after his death.

## Did Shakespeare write Shakespeare?

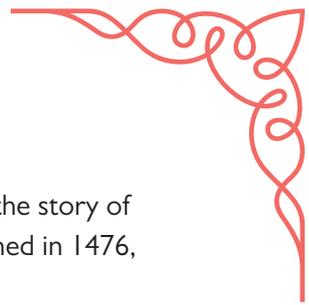
Nearly all scholars agree that we have enough evidence to confirm that William Shakespeare, the man born in Stratford-upon-Avon, was the author of the plays and poems attributed to him. However, a few other theories exist as to who wrote the plays. Some authors who have been suggested include Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford; Christopher Marlowe (a talented playwright who died in 1593 but whom 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 eleven).
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.

# 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 in 1594, but it is set earlier during the Italian Renaissance. The Renaissance (approximately 1400–1600) 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 also 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 these 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 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.

# 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 and 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 and support of literature and art.



*The Darnley Portrait of Elizabeth I, c.1570*

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 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 there was 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 was 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 the English became an important world power. In 1588 the English navy won a famous victory over the Spanish Armada, which was regarded as the greatest naval power in the world.

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 toured the country, looking for work 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 may never have become the famous playwright we know him as today.

# A day in 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 30 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.

The play being performed is *Romeo and Juliet*. It is almost five years old now, but it is still a crowd-pleaser. 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 Latin 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. You notice today, however, that the central balcony is empty.

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 a football game, 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 on stage.

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 them are played by men, and younger characters, like Juliet, are played by boys whose voices have not yet broken. Theatre companies are considered too dangerous for women, who won't be permitted on stage for another 60 years.

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

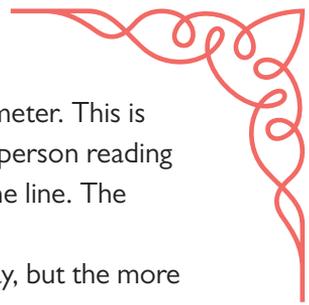


*Interior of the New Globe Theatre*









In the lines above, 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 cruel 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 but 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, more chatty, and can move quite quickly.

## 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)
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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.



# 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**

When the servant asks Romeo if he can read, Romeo answers, 'Ay, if I know the letters and the language'. He means, 'Yes, I can read, providing it's a language I know'. 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)**

When Romeo and Juliet talk in the Capulet orchard, Juliet requests, 'If thou mean'st not well, / I do beseech thee . . . to cease thy suit'. She is begging him to stop pursuing her if his intentions are not good and honourable.

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

When Romeo complains to Friar Laurence, 'Thou chidest me oft for loving Rosaline' (Act 2 Scene 3), he is basically saying, 'You often criticised me for loving Rosaline'.

## **Civil: Public**

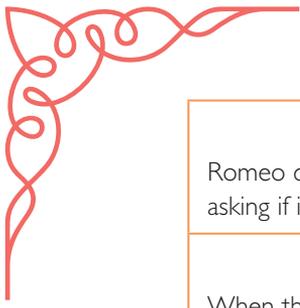
In the Prologue we are told that 'civil blood makes civil hands unclean'. When the Prince states that there have been 'three civil brawls' (Act 1 Scene 1), he means that there have been three public or local brawls.

## **Ere (pronounced air): Before**

In Act 2, Juliet describes the couple's situation (falling in love) as 'Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be / Ere one can say "It lightens"'. She uses the example of lightning because it happens so quickly there is not even time to say anything about it before the sky is dark again.

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

Throughout the play Romeo and Juliet are warned against acting in haste or rushing things without thinking. When Juliet wishes for the Friar to marry them quickly, she tells him to 'make haste' or hurry up.



**Hence: Away from here**

Romeo questions Benvolio, 'Was that my father that went hence so fast?' He is asking if it was his father who went away so quickly.

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

When the Nurse says to Juliet, 'Hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell', she is telling her to leave immediately and hurry to see Friar Laurence.

**Kinsmen / kin / kindred: Relatives**

When Gregory says, 'Here comes one of my master's kinsmen', he is pointing out that one of Capulet's (his master's) relatives is approaching.

**Thou: You; Thy: Your**

When Mercutio tells Benvolio, 'Thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog', he is saying: 'You (Benvolio) have picked a fight with someone for coughing'.

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

When Gregory says in the opening scene, 'I will show myself a tyrant', he means that he will act in a cruel and violent way.

**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.

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

The Nurse asks Juliet, 'Have you got leave to go to shrift today?' She is asking if Juliet is allowed to go to the church in order to confess her sins to a priest.

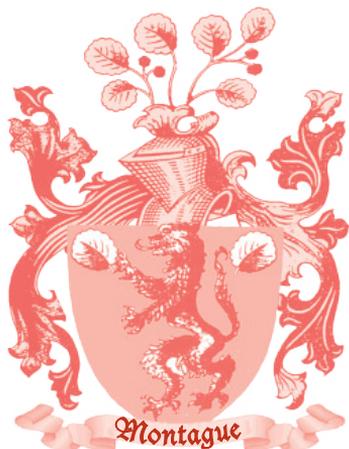
**Yonder / yond / yon: Over there**

When Romeo says, 'What light through yonder window breaks?' he is asking about the light that is coming from the window over there. It would be the same if he described the window as 'yon window' or 'yond window'.

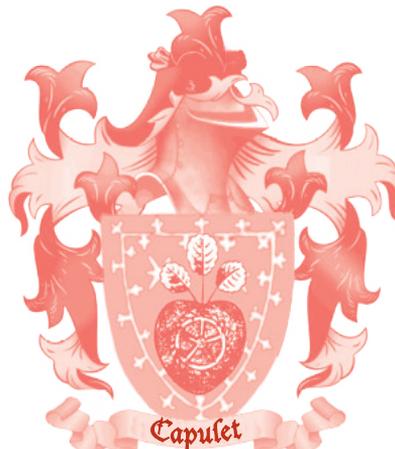
# The characters

## 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 or page to Romeo (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, page to Paris, a further page, officer, citizens, maskers, relatives of both households, guards, watchmen and attendants

# 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

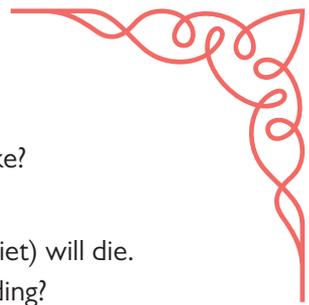
<b>Mutiny:</b>	Violence
<b>Civil:</b>	Public
<b>From forth:</b>	Bred from
<b>Star-crossed:</b>	Unfortunate or ill-fated
<b>Nought:</b>	Nothing

## 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, 10  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
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.



- 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 the couple (Romeo and Juliet) will die. Why do you think Shakespeare chooses to give away the ending?
- 5 How will this affect the way we read or view the play?



EXTEND

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.



PRESS  
PLAY

Watch the Prologue in Franco Zeffirelli's (1968) and Baz Luhrmann's (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 two 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 anyone who causes another brawl with death. 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 where he might meet someone he will love even more. At the ball, Romeo meets Juliet and they fall in love instantly, but Tybalt (a Capulet) realises that Romeo (a Montague) has gatecrashed and so Tybalt 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 rage, Romeo kills Tybalt and is consequently banished from Verona. Romeo and Juliet secretly spend the night together in the Capulet house, and Romeo leaves for Mantua in the 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. It will make her seem dead, but 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 his message is delayed, meaning he is unable to inform him 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 Juliet's death. Then, at Juliet's side, Romeo kills himself. Juliet awakes and, seeing Romeo dead, 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.
- You may choose to represent a character, an event or even an idea. You may strike a pose where you are doing two things at once.
- Your teacher will tell you to present Act 1 and then instruct you to CHANGE and then FREEZE for your representation of Act 2. This will continue until you have represented all five acts.
- You shouldn’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 to the class what you represent, who you are or what you are doing.

# Act 1

## Act 1 Scene 1 (Part 1)

### CHARACTERS

Sampson  
Gregory  
Prince  
Abraham  
Tybalt  
Benvolio  
Capulet  
Lady Capulet  
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.
- 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 ‘your majesty’ if they are being too demanding or think a lot of themselves.
- ‘Put up thy sword’ means to raise your sword so that it is not dangerously pointing at someone.
- ‘Give me my long sword, ho!’ (line 42) When Capulet uses the word ‘ho’, he is not referring to his wife in the insulting way a gangster rapper might! ‘Ho’ is a word of exclamation, like ‘hey’ or ‘oi’ or even ‘now’.
- Look out for the use of dashes (–) that show an interruption in the flow of the conversation. For example, in line 45, Montague is confronting Capulet but is also talking to his wife: ‘Thou villain, Capulet! – Hold me not; let me go!’



V

- Quarrel:** A fight
- Maidenhead:** A woman's virginity
- Tyrant:** A cruel leader; here, the cruel part is what is important
- Marry:** An expression similar to 'really' or 'exactly', referring to the Virgin Mary
- List:** Like or wish

## Verona. A public place.

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

GREGORY           The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.  
 SAMPSON           'Tis all one; I will show myself a tyrant: when I have fought with the  
                           men, I will be cruel with the maids, and cut off their heads.

GREGORY           The heads of the maids?  
 SAMPSON           Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads; take 5  
                           it in what sense thou wilt.

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.

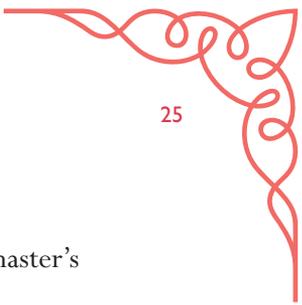
GREGORY           Draw thy tool! Here comes two of the house of the Montagues. 10  
 SAMPSON           My naked weapon is out: quarrel, I will back thee.  
 GREGORY           How! Turn thy back and run?  
 SAMPSON           Fear me not.  
 GREGORY           No, marry; I fear thee!  
 SAMPSON           Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin. 15  
 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?  
 SAMPSON           I do bite my thumb, sir. 20  
 ABRAHAM           Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?  
 SAMPSON           *[Aside to GREGORY]* Is the law on 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.



- 5   Heads of the maids ... maidenheads:** A rude play on words, as maidenhead means a woman's virginity.
- 8–9   I am a pretty piece of flesh:** I have a hot body.
- 15   Take the law of our sides:** Stay on the right side of the law.
- 17–18   Which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it:** Biting your thumb at someone was insulting, so you would not tolerate it.



GREGORY Do you quarrel, sir? 25  
 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.  
 GREGORY *[Aside to SAMPSON]* Say 'better'; here comes one of my master's  
 kinsmen.  
 SAMPSON Yes, better, sir. 30  
 ABRAHAM You lie.  
 SAMPSON Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.

*[They fight. BENVOLIO enters]*

BENVOLIO Part, fools!  
 Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

*[TYBALT enters]*

TYBALT What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? 35  
 Turn thee, Benvolio; look upon thy death.  
 BENVOLIO I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword,  
 Or manage it to part these men with me.  
 TYBALT What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,  
 As I hate hell, all Montagues and thee. 40  
 Have at thee, coward!

*[They fight. CAPULET and LADY CAPULET enter]*

CAPULET What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!  
 L. CAPULET A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?  
 CAPULET My sword, I say! Old Montague is come.

*[MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE enter]*

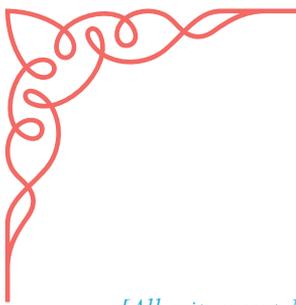
MONTAGUE Thou villain, Capulet! – Hold me not; let me go. 45  
 L. MONTAGUE Thou shalt not stir a foot to seek a foe.

*[PRINCE and his attendants enter, as the fighting continues briefly]*

PRINCE Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,  
 On pain of torture, from those bloody hands  
 Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground,  
 And hear the sentence of your movèd prince. 50  
 Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,



- 
- 35 **Drawn among these heartless hinds:** A play on words: (a) servants who lack heart or courage; (b) female deer (hind) without a male leader (hart).
- 43 **A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword:** Lady Capulet is making fun of her husband's age, suggesting he is incapable of using a sword and needs a crutch instead.
- 49 **Mistempered weapons:** Steel is tempered or hardened, so the Prince is playing on the word, suggesting that their weapons are used for an evil purpose.



By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets.  
If ever you disturb our streets again,  
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.  
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

55

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



55

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



QUESTIONS

- 1 What begins the brawl in this scene?
- 2 Sampson and Gregory seem very similar. Describe their personalities.
- 3 How do Benvolio's and Tybalt's characters differ or 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 uses to successfully capture the audience's interest?



DISCUSS

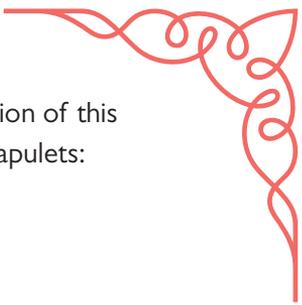
- 1 What do you think an equivalent to biting your thumb might be today?
- 2 What kinds of similar brawls do we see today? Do they have similar causes?



PRESS  
PLAY

View Baz Luhrmann's film version from the Prologue to halfway through Act I Scene I, until the end of the brawl.

Luhrmann uses a number of **techniques** to portray the conflict between the Montagues and the Capulets. He shows that they oppose each other in several ways. One way is through his 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'.

- 
- 1 How does Luhrmann use the following aspects 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.



*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 out on the streets, and in the taverns and bars in which Shakespeare would have drunk. 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.

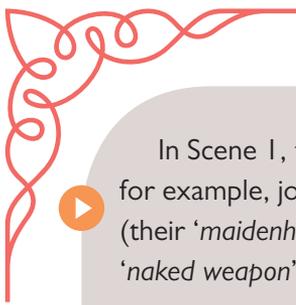
Actors and playwrights who worked in rough neighbourhoods weren't the only ones at risk. It was common to go about the streets armed. Women in particular were not likely to leave home without taking a small dagger called a bodkin with them for their own protection.

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 that is 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 and it was often used in duels.

## 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 like each other, such as 'made' and 'marred' (meaning ruined), which is a pun that Capulet uses in Scene 2.





In Scene 1, 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:

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 other puns that Shakespeare likes to use, especially in Act 1 Scene 4.

## Act 1 Scene 1 (Part 2)

### CHARACTERS

Romeo  
Benvolio  
Montague  
Lady Montague



### IN A NUTSHELL

*After the brawl, Montague and Lady Montague ask Benvolio about their son, Romeo. They are concerned by his moody and antisocial 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'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.
- 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.
- There are many short lines and quick exchanges between Benvolio and Romeo in this scene. Many of the lines in the conversation rhyme. The rhyme gives the conversation a momentum, that is, the first part of the rhyme sets up an expectation. The thought almost seems incomplete until the other character completes the rhyming couplet.

- Remember that you don't have to understand every joke that is made, merely the gist of the conversation.
- The scene introduces two characters from Greek mythology – Cupid, the Roman god of love and Dian (Diana), the goddess of hunting in ancient Rome. Cupid 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 was known as Artemis in ancient Greece. 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).



<b>Fray:</b>	Fight
<b>Augmenting:</b>	Adding
<b>Portentous:</b>	Serious, a sign that something bad is going to happen
<b>Humour:</b>	Mood or, in this case, behaviour
<b>Chastity:</b>	Sexual purity, avoidance of sex

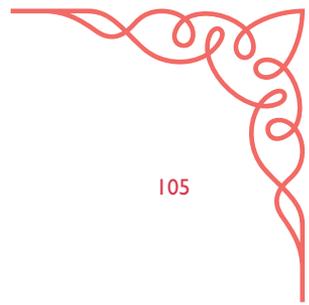
## Verona. A public place.

L. MONTAGUE	O, where is Romeo? Saw you him today? Right glad I am he was not at this fray.	
BENVOLIO	Madam, an hour before the worshipped sun Peeped through the golden window of the east, A troubled mind drew me from company; Where, underneath the grove of sycamore So early walking did I see your son: T'wards him I made, but he was ware of me And stole into the thicket of the wood.	60      65
MONTAGUE	Many a morning hath he there been seen, With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew, Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs. Away from light steals home my heavy son, And private in his chamber pens himself, Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out, And makes himself an artificial night.	      70



- 62 **The grove of sycamore:** A circle of sycamore trees.  
65 **Stole into the thicket of the wood:** Hid in the forest.





BENVOLIO No, coz, I rather weep.  
 ROMEO Good heart, at what?  
 BENVOLIO At thy good heart's oppression. 105  
 Tell me in sadness, who is that you love?  
 ROMEO In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.  
 BENVOLIO I aimed so near, when I supposed you loved.  
 ROMEO A right good mark-man! And she's fair I love.  
 BENVOLIO A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit. 110  
 ROMEO Well, in that hit you miss: she'll not be hit  
 With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's wit;  
 And, in strong proof of chastity well armed,  
 From love's weak childish bow she lives unharmed.  
 BENVOLIO Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste? 115  
 ROMEO She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste.  
 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 – 120  
 ROMEO Farewell! Thou canst not teach me to forget.  
 BENVOLIO I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

[Both exit]



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 do the words below describe Romeo's use of language?  
 Create a table like the following for your notes.

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



## Introducing oxymorons

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 oxymorons you can find in this speech, other than ‘cold fire’ and ‘sick health’.

Why, then, O brawling love! O loving hate!  
O any thing, 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.

100

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

## Act 1 Scene 2

### CHARACTERS

Capulet  
Romeo  
Benvolio  
Paris  
Servant  
[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 guestlist 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 guests, who include 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.



<b>Suit:</b>	Offer of marriage
<b>Marred:</b>	Ruined or made bad
<b>Woo:</b>	Trying to win the love of someone
<b>Learnèd:</b>	Knowledgeable

## A street.

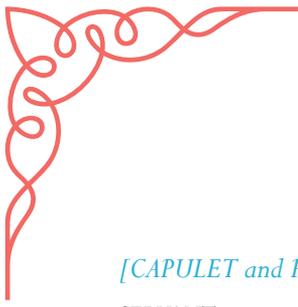
CAPULET	But Montague is bound as well as I, In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think, For men so old as we to keep the peace.	
PARIS	Of honourable reckoning are you both; And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.	5
	But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?	
CAPULET	But saying o'er what I have said 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. But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart, My will to her consent is but a part; If 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.	15
	At my poor house look to behold this night Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light. Come, go with me –	20

*[CAPULET speaks to his SERVANT, giving him a piece of paper]*



**17–18 If she agree ... fair according voice:** If Juliet chooses someone worthy, I will give permission for her to marry.

**22 Earth-treading stars:** Beautiful, perhaps even angelic women.



Go, sirrah, trudge about  
 Through fair Verona; find those persons out  
 Whose names are written there, and to them say, 25  
 My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

*[CAPULET and PARIS exit]*

SERVANT I am sent to find those persons who are written here and yet I know not who are written here. I must to the learned to learn of them.

*[BENVOLIO and ROMEO enter; they are midway through a conversation]*

BENVOLIO Why, Romeo, art thou mad?  
 ROMEO Not mad, but bound more than a mad-man is; 30

Shut up in prison, kept without my food,  
 Whipped and tormented and – Good-day, good fellow.

SERVANT Good-day to you. I pray, sir, can you read?

ROMEO Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

SERVANT Perhaps you have learned it without book: but, I pray, 35  
 can you read any thing you see?

ROMEO Ay, if I know the letters and the language.

SERVANT Ye say honestly. Rest you merry!

ROMEO Stay, fellow; I can read.

*[ROMEO takes the piece of paper from the SERVANT and reads it]*

Signior Martino and his wife and daughters, 40  
 County Anselme and his beauteous sisters,  
 Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces,  
 Mercutio and his brother Valentine,  
 Uncle Capulet, his wife and daughters,

My fair niece Rosaline, 45

Signior Valentio and his cousin,

Tybalt, Lucio and Helena.

A fair assembly: whither should they come?

SERVANT To supper; to our house.

ROMEO Whose house? 50

SERVANT My master's.

ROMEO Indeed, I should have asked you that before.

SERVANT Now I'll tell you without asking. My master is the great rich Capulet; 55  
 and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray, come and crush  
 a cup of wine. Rest you merry!

*[SERVANT exits]*



23 **Sirrah:** A form of address similar to Sir, but often used to address people of lower social rank or position (e.g. a servant).

38 **Rest you merry:** A way of saying goodbye, similar to 'God bless'.

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

ROMEO            I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,  
                      But to rejoice in splendour of mine own.

60

[ALL exit]



**62–63 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 perhaps 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?

## 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 three metaphors that are used to describe women in Act I Scene 2. Find which character uses each phrase and label them as complimentary or uncomplimentary (for example, calling someone hot is complimentary).

Phrase	Character who uses this phrase	Complimentary or not?
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?

## Act 1 Scene 3

### CHARACTERS

Lady Capulet  
Juliet  
Nurse  
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 during Elizabethan times in the History Box on page 38.



**Disposition:** Nature, temperament or feeling  
**Valiant:** Noble or heroic

## A room in Capulet's house.

L. 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, Juliet!

*[JULIET enters]*

JULIET How now! Who calls?

NURSE Your mother. 5

JULIET Madam, I am here. What is your will?

L. 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.

L. 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 –

L. CAPULET Enough of this; I pray thee, hold thy peace.

NURSE Peace, I have done – God mark thee to his grace!  
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed:  
If I might live to see thee married once,  
I have my wish – 15

L. CAPULET Marry, that 'marry' is the very theme  
I came to talk of – Tell me, daughter Juliet,  
How stands your disposition to be married? 20

JULIET It is an honour that I dream not of.

L. CAPULET Well, think of marriage now; younger than you,  
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,  
Are made already mothers. By my count,  
I was your mother much upon these years  
That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:  
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love. 25

NURSE A man, young lady! Lady, such a man  
As all the world – why, he's a man of wax. 30

L. CAPULET Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

NURSE Nay, he's a flower; in faith, a very flower.

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

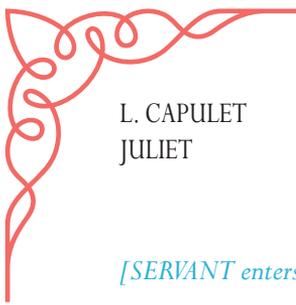
9 **Thou s'hear:** You shall hear.

13 **To my teen:** To my sorrow OR I'm sorry to say ...

21 **How stands your disposition to be married:** How would you feel about getting married?

30 **A man of wax:** A perfect man, a model.





L. 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.

35

[SERVANT enters]

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

L. CAPULET     We follow thee – Juliet, the County stays.

NURSE           Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

40

[ALL exit]



**34–36 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.

**38–39 Everything in extremity:** Everything in the house is in a state of chaos and confusion because they are organising the masked ball.



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 How do Lady Capulet and the Nurse try to persuade Juliet to marry? What reasons are given?
- 3 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: '*At twelve year-old / I bade her come*'? (Keep in mind Juliet's age.)
- 2 Using evidence from this scene, approximately how old do you think Juliet's mother might be?

- 3 Here are some phrases that Juliet's mother (Lady Capulet) and her Nurse use when talking to Juliet. Create a table similar to the following for the questions in column 1.

	Lady Capulet	Nurse
<b>Words and phrases used when talking to Juliet.</b>	'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.'
<b>Describe the language each of the characters uses when talking to Juliet.</b>		
<b>What is her attitude towards Juliet?</b>		
<b>Describe her relationship with Juliet.</b>		



DISCUSS

- 1 How would you feel about your parents having such an influence on whom you married?
- 2 Consider the following lines 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 the best. They could be delivered as an obedient Elizabethan daughter or as an Australian teenager who is in a bad mood.



*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 child 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), like Romeo and Paris do. 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 the last scene we met 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 to 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 4

### CHARACTERS

Mercutio  
Romeo  
Benvolio



### IN A NUTSHELL

*Romeo's friend 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 tonight.*

### Before you read

- Try to visualise a big group heading for a party. 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.
- Romeo's lines should be delivered with a depressed weariness; Mercutio's delivery will be much quicker and more playful.
- The long speech in which Mercutio speaks about Queen Mab (lines 25–53) 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.



**Wit:** Sense or intelligence; when Romeo says, 'But 'tis no wit to go' he means that it's not wise to go to the party

**Begot:** Conceived or created by

## A street.

*[ROMEO, MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO enter, with five or six Maskers, Torch-bearers, and others]*

ROMEO	Give me a torch: I am not for this ambling; Being but heavy, I will bear the light.	
MERCUTIO	Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.	
ROMEO	Not I, believe me: you have dancing shoes With nimble soles: I have a soul of lead	5
	So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.	
MERCUTIO	You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings, And soar with them above a common bound.	
ROMEO	I am too sore enpiercèd with his shaft To soar with his light feathers, and so bound,	10
	I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe: Under love's heavy burden do I sink.	
MERCUTIO	And, to sink in it, should you burden love; Too great oppression for a tender thing.	
ROMEO	Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,	15
	Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.	
MERCUTIO	If love be rough with you, be rough with love; Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down. Come, we burn daylight, ho!	
ROMEO	And we mean well in going to this mask; But 'tis no wit to go.	20



18

**Prick love for pricking and you beat love down:** Literally: If love hurts you, hurt it back; Mercutio is playing on the word 'prick' here, and the strong sexual connotation is no accident.



Making them women of good carriage.  
This is she –

ROMEO Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!  
Thou talk'st of nothing.

MERCUTIO True, I talk of dreams, 55  
Which are the children of an idle brain,  
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,  
Which is as thin of substance as the air  
And more inconstant than the wind, who woos  
Even now the frozen bosom of the north, 60  
And, being angered, puffs away from thence,  
Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

BENVOLIO This wind, you talk of, blows us from ourselves;  
Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

ROMEO I fear too early, for my mind misgives 65  
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,  
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date  
With this night's revels, and expire the term  
Of a despisèd life, closed in my breast,  
By some vile forfeit of untimely death. 70  
But He that hath the steerage of my course,  
Direct my sail! – On, lusty gentlemen!

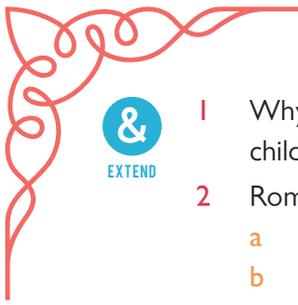
[ALL exit]

- 52 **Women of good carriage:** Women who can bear children well.
- 65–69 **My mind misgives ... despised life:** Romeo is worried that, if he goes to the party, destiny will set off a chain of events that will result in someone's death.
- 71–72 **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 God or perhaps fate or destiny.
- 72 **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*'. 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 25–53) and answer the following questions.
  - a Describe the size of Queen Mab.
  - b What does she gallop through?
  - c Of what does she make people dream?



- 1 Why do you think Mercutio ends a speech on love and dreams by discussing childbirth? What point might he be making?
- 2 Romeo predicts ‘*some consequence, yet hanging in the stars*’.
  - 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?

## A closer look at puns

In the following passage, Mercutio and Romeo use many **puns** or plays on words. Read the passage and emphasise the words that are underlined.

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

MERCUTIO: Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

ROMEO: Not I, believe me: you have dancing shoes  
With nimble soles: I have a soul of lead 5  
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

MERCUTIO: You are a lover; borrow Cupid’s wings  
And soar with them above a common bound.

ROMEO: I am too sore enpiercèd with his shaft  
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound, 10  
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe ...

**Q** Two different meanings for the underlined words are used in each of these cases. Try explaining these meanings in a table like the following.

Pun	First meaning	Second meaning
heavy / light	Weighed down with sadness	Torch to see their way
soles / soul	Bottom of someone’s feet	
sore / soar		
bound / bound		

**Q** In the following passage, the word that is played with or punned on is used only once.

ROMEO: I dreamed a dream tonight.  
MERCUTIO: And so did I.  
ROMEO: Well, what was yours?  
MERCUTIO: That dreamers often lie.  
ROMEO: In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.

What word is punned (has its sound and meaning played with)? Explain the various meanings of this word.

## Act 1 Scene 5

### CHARACTERS

Romeo  
Juliet  
Capulet  
Tybalt  
Nurse  
Benvolio  
Servant  
[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 Romeo and Juliet each 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.
- Watch for Romeo and Juliet's **extended metaphor** (or conceit) of religious pilgrims and how they compare pilgrims to lovers. In pairs, practise lines 44–61, spoken when Romeo and Juliet first meet. It's love at first sight! Focus on the language. It is rich in imagery of religious pilgrims to emphasise the purity and innocence of their love.



V

- Solemnity:** An occasion of some importance that people celebrate; in this case, it is a masked ball
- Prodigious:** Sometimes means amazing, but it could also mean monstrous or appalling
- Portly:** Well-mannered

## A hall in the Capulet house.

*[CAPULET enters, with JULIET and others of his house, meeting the Guests and Maskers]*

CAPULET            Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day  
                          That I have worn a visor and could tell  
                          A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,  
                          Such as would please: 'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.  
                          You are welcome, gentlemen! – Come, musicians, play. 5

*[Music plays and they dance]*

ROMEO            *[To a SERVANT]*  
                          What lady's that, which doth enrich the hand  
                          Of yonder knight?

SERVANT        I know not, sir.

ROMEO            O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!  
                          It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night 10  
                          Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;  
                          Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!  
                          So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,  
                          As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.  
                          Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! 15  
                          For I never saw true beauty till this night.

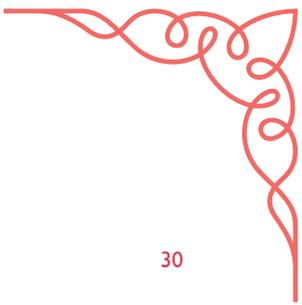
TYBALT         This, by his voice, should be a Montague –  
                          Fetch me my rapier, boy – What dares the slave  
                          Come hither, covered with an antic face,  
                          To flear and scorn at our solemnity? 20  
                          Now, 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, 25  
                          To scorn at our solemnity this night.



- 2 **Visor:** Mask.
- 15 **Forswear it, sight:** My eyes deny that I have seen true beauty before now.
- 18–20 **What dares ... solemnity:** I can't believe that slave has the nerve to come with a mask to mock our family at this time of celebration.



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  
 To be a virtuous and well-governed youth:  
 I would not for the wealth of all this town  
 Here in my house do him disparagement:  
 Therefore be patient, take no note of him.  
 TYBALT I'll not endure him.  
 CAPULET He shall be endured:  
 What, goodman boy! I say, he shall: go to;  
 Am I the master here, or you? Go to.  
 TYBALT Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.  
 CAPULET Go to, go to;  
 You are a princox; go: is't so indeed?  
 Be quiet, or, for shame! I'll make you quiet! –  
 More light, more light! 30

*[CAPULET exits]*

TYBALT I will withdraw: but this intrusion shall  
 Now seeming sweet convert to bitter gall.

*[TYBALT exits]*

ROMEO *[To JULIET]* If I profane with my unworhiest hand  
 This holy shrine, the gentle sin 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. 45  
 ROMEO Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?  
 JULIET Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.  
 ROMEO O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;  
 They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair. 50  
 JULIET Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.  
 ROMEO Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.  
 Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged. 55



- 29 **He bears him like a portly gentleman:** He is behaving like an honourable gentleman.
- 33 **Do him disparagement:** Treat him disrespectfully by treating him as if he is of lower class or value.
- 36 **Goodman boy:** Childish, immature and cheeky little boy.
- 38 **Go to, go to:** An expression of impatience, similar to 'that's enough'.



- 
- 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?



- 1 At the end of his first speech, Romeo exclaims:

Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!  
For I never 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.

- 2 How do the following **language 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.)
- 3 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?
- 4 Juliet's last four lines 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.)

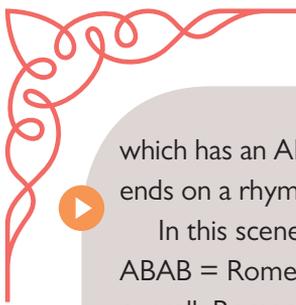
## A word about sonnets

There is something special about the way lines 44–57 are set out in this scene: this passage is 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 8–12) useful in explaining iambic pentameter and for another look at sonnets, see 'Shakespeare on love', page 149.



*Come, musicians, play ...*

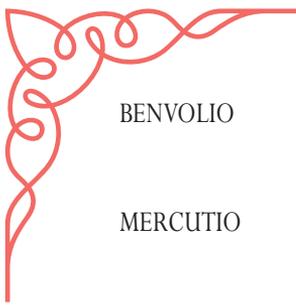
## Elizabethan parties

In Act 1 Scene 5 Romeo and his friends attend a masked ball at the Capulets' house. Wearing masks enables Romeo and his friends 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 the same way internet chat rooms can today).

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.





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

MERCUTIO      If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark –  
Romeo, good night: I'll to my truckle-bed;  
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep –  
Come, shall we go?

15



- 14 **To be consorted with:** To keep company with.
- 14 **Humorous night:** The night is as dark as Romeo's mood.
- 17 **I'll to my truckle-bed:** Narrow single bed; therefore, Mercutio is suggesting, 'Poor me ... I'll be lonely tonight, unlike Romeo!'



QUESTIONS

Quote a line or phrase from Mercutio's speech that suggests Romeo ...

- a recites too much poetry
- b is in love with Rosaline.

## 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 around the corner is someone with a gun, but the characters are unaware and go to walk around the 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 Another 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 (lines 10–12) 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 they can arrange it. The scene ends with neither of the lovers wishing to say the final goodnight.*

### Before you read

- 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 Romeo is listening to Juliet speak early in this scene and he comments on what she says. She does not hear him speaking or know that he is there until he exclaims, *‘I take thee at thy word’* (line 38), startling her.
- This scene contains the most famous lines in the play (especially lines 2 and 22). In this speech, Romeo admires Juliet’s beauty, comparing her to a number of objects and reflecting on what it might be like to be near her.

- Finally, the word 'wherefore' (line 22) 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.



<b>Entreat:</b>	Beg somebody for something
<b>Doff:</b>	Put aside or take off (opposite of don, to put on)
<b>Henceforth:</b>	From now on
<b>Idolatry:</b>	Worship (of something other than God)
<b>Fain:</b>	Gladly
<b>Anon:</b>	Soon (like saying 'In a minute' when a parent calls you)

## Capulet's orchard.

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,

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!

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,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

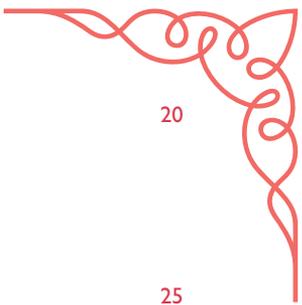
JULIET

Ay me!



8 **Vestal livery:** Virginal dress (comes from the term Vestal Virgins, who 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.



ROMEO She speaks: 20  
           O, speak again, bright angel!  
 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. 25  
 ROMEO 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,  
           Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part 30  
           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,  
           Retain that dear perfection which he owes 35  
           Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
           And for thy name which is no part of thee  
           Take all myself.  
 ROMEO I take thee at thy word:  
           Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised;  
           Henceforth I never will be Romeo. 40  
 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,  
           Because it is an enemy to thee; 45  
           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?  
 ROMEO Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike. 50  
 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.  
 ROMEO With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls; 55  
           For stony limits cannot hold love out,



39–40 **Call me but love ... Romeo:** Romeo is willing to change his name so he can be with Juliet, the daughter of his enemy.

48 **Utterance:** Speech.



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

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

ROMEO Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye 60  
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;  
And but thou love me, let them find me here. 65

JULIET Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment! 70  
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'  
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. 75

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. 80

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 –

JULIET Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee, 85  
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!  
ROMEO O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied? 90



- 
- 58 **No let to me:** No hindrance to me, cannot hold me back.
  - 60 **Alack:** An expression of regret, like 'Oh, dear'.
  - 61–62 **Look thou ... their enmity:** Your beauty is so powerful that it will protect me from harm.
  - 69–70 **Fain would I ... farewell compliment:** I would gladly follow the rules of proper conduct, but goodbye to manners or etiquette.
  - 73–74 **At lovers' perjuries / They say, Jove laughs:** Jove was the King of Roman gods, who often disguised himself in order to have an affair – thus he laughs along with lovers who lie or disguise the truth.

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.

*[Juliet's NURSE calls from within]*

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!  
– Anon, good Nurse! – Sweet Montague, be true.  
Stay but a little, I will come again.

95

*[JULIET exits, above]*

ROMEO           O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard:  
                    Being in night, all this is but a dream,  
                    Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

100

*[JULIET re-enters, above]*

JULIET           Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.  
                    If that thy bent of love be honourable,  
                    Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,  
                    By one that I'll procure to come to thee,  
                    Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;  
                    And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay  
                    And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

105

NURSE           *[Within]* Madam!

JULIET           I come, anon – But if thou mean'st not well,  
                    I do beseech thee –

110

NURSE           *[Within]* Madam!

JULIET           By and by, I come –  
                    To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:  
                    Tomorrow will I send.

ROMEO           So thrive my soul –

115

JULIET           A thousand times good night!

*[JULIET exits, above]*

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

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

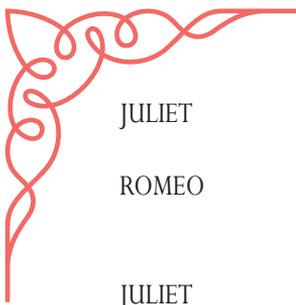
95     **Adieu:** French for goodbye.

102    **If that thy bent of love be honourable:** If your intentions are honest or if you genuinely love me.

104    **Procure:** To get or obtain something.

113    **To cease thy suit:** Juliet is asking Romeo not to lead her on – if he's not serious, then he needs to stop trying to win her heart.





JULIET Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falc'ner's voice 120  
To lure this tassel-gentle back again.

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

JULIET Romeo!

ROMEO My dear?

JULIET At what o'clock tomorrow 125  
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO At the hour of nine.

JULIET I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.  
Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.



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

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



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, 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 10–15 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 Would you say that the ways in which Romeo and Juliet use language are similar or different? Explain using some examples.



DISCUSS

To what extent do you agree with these 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.				



PRESS PLAY

View Zeffirelli's and Luhrmann's interpretations of this scene and discuss the following questions.

- 1 Which version do you think better conveys the fear and danger that the situation poses for Romeo?
- 2 How do the two films portray Juliet's character differently?
- 3 How similar is each film's soundtrack (music and other sounds) in creating a romantic mood or atmosphere?



# 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 the light of his recent 'love' for Rosaline. He agrees to marry him to Juliet because he believes it will end the feud between the two families.*

### Before you read

- Many of the lines in this scene rhyme and sometimes Romeo and 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.
- If you read Romeo's lines, remember that you are impatient and very eager to be married.



<b>Grace:</b>	Goodness
<b>Benedicite:</b>	A greeting and a blessing (pronounced in five syllables: <i>ben-e-dik-i-tay</i> )
<b>Predominant:</b>	Most common
<b>Canker:</b>	A cancer or infection
<b>Rancour:</b>	Hatred and bitterness
<b>Physic:</b>	Medicine or remedy

## Friar Laurence's cell.

*[FRIAR LAURENCE enters, with a basket of herbs and flowers]*

FR. LAURENCE    Within the infant rind of this weak flower  
Poison hath residence and medicine power:  
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;  
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.

5

*[ROMEO enters]*

ROMEO            Good morrow, father.

FR. LAURENCE                            Benedicite!

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?  
Or if not so, then here I hit it right,  
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

10

ROMEO            That last is true; the sweeter rest was mine.

FR. LAURENCE    God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?

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

15

FR. 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  
That's by me wounded. Both our remedies  
Within thy help and holy physic lies.

20

FR. LAURENCE    Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift;  
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

ROMEO            Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set  
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet:

25

As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine;  
And all combined, save what thou must combine  
By holy marriage: when and where and how  
We met, we wooed and made exchange of vow,

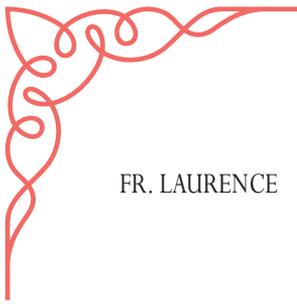
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1–6    **Within the infant rind ... grace and rude will:** Friar Laurence describes the way that plants can contain both poison and medicine – two contradictory concepts.

7–8    **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 control us, it will destroy us like a disease will destroy a plant.

23–24    **Be plain ... riddling shrift:** Tell me your problem in plain and simple language so I can provide you a plain and simple cure.





I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,  
That thou consent to marry us today.

FR. LAURENCE Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!  
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,  
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies 35  
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

ROMEO Thou chidest me oft for loving Rosaline.

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

ROMEO I pray thee, chide not; she whom I love now  
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow; 40  
The other did not so.

FR. 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;  
For this alliance may so happy prove, 45  
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

ROMEO O, let us hence; I stand on sudden haste.

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

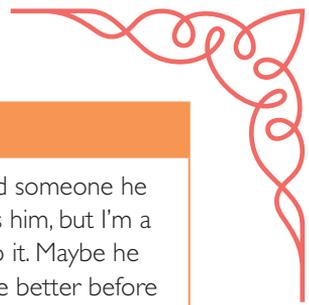


- 38 Doting:** Childish or silly infatuation; puppy love.
- 42 Thy love did read by rote:** Your love was not real because you were just repeating things that you had memorised.



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 uses words such as 'wisely' and 'slow'. 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 over the 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'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.
Capulet	
Nurse	
Tybalt	
Mercutio	

5 At the beginning of this scene the Friar compares a flower, that can contain both medicine and poison, to humans, who can show both positive qualities ('grace') and negative qualities ('rude will'). What negative and positive qualities have you observed in characters so far in the play? Create a table similar to the following for your notes.

Negative quality	Characters who show this quality
Anger / bitterness	
Impatience / impulsiveness	
Other?	
Positive quality	Characters who show this quality
Care / concern	
Love	
Other?	



- 1 What do you think Friar Laurence means when he says, '*she [Rosaline] knew well / Thy love did read by rote and could not spell*'?
- 2 Read lines 20–22 closely:
  - a Romeo is comparing love with a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b He is comparing the Friar with a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c This is an extended \_\_\_\_\_ or a conceit.
  - d How might these lines relate to Cupid?



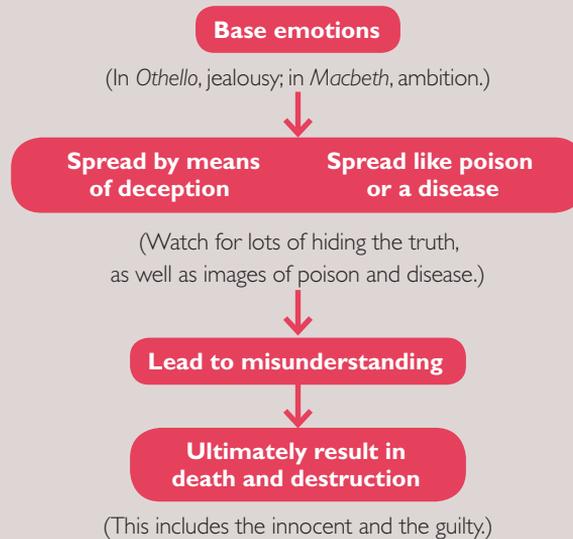
Do you think it is wise for Romeo and Juliet to marry each other in secret? Why or why not?

## Thinking about characters and their fatal flaws

Shakespeare's plays are not just fascinating stories; they also communicate some important ideas or messages. These are known as **themes**, which are recurring ideas or concepts that can be seen in a text.

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 is usually death and destruction, sometimes these weaknesses are described as **fatal flaws**. They have also been given the label **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 ambition (in *Macbeth*).

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



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



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 St 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 not marry 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 in 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 see the introduction on Elizabethan England (pages 4–5).

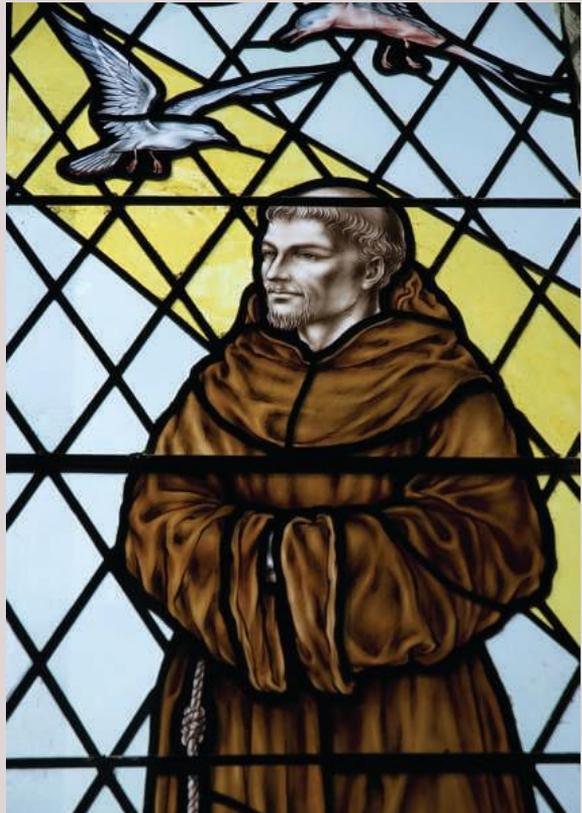


Image of St Francis of Assisi on a stained-glass window

# H

*A challenge, on my life ...*

## Duelling

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

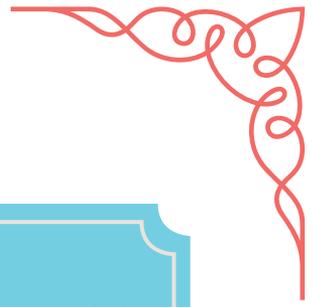
Duels were sometimes fought by individuals but often involved more than two people. The rules for any duel would be made clear before it was fought. Special observers were present to make sure that the rules were followed and that the combatants were not carrying any hidden weapons or magical charms, 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; 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

- In greeting Romeo with the French word 'Bonjour', Mercutio makes fun of Romeo, who uses fashionable French words and could be wearing French clothes or a costume from the previous night's party.
- 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 on 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).



<b>Wench:</b>	A girl or a woman; in this case, it probably means mistress or prostitute
<b>Cleft:</b>	A substantial gap or crack
<b>Salutation:</b>	Greeting
<b>Bawd:</b>	Prostitute



## A street.

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.  
BENVOLIO Tybalt, the kinsman of old Capulet, hath sent a letter to 5  
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.  
BENVOLIO Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares, being dared. 10  
MERCUTIO Alas poor Romeo! He is already dead; stabbed with a white wench's  
black eye; shot 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?  
BENVOLIO Why, what is Tybalt? 15  
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, a duellist,  
a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house! Ah, the immortal 20  
passado! The punto reverso! The hai!  
BENVOLIO The what?  
MERCUTIO The pox of such antic, lispng, affecting fantasticoes; that we should be  
thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these  
perdonami's – 25

[ROMEO enters]

BENVOLIO Here comes Romeo! Here comes Romeo!  
MERCUTIO Signior Romeo, bonjour! There's a French salutation to your French  
slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.  
ROMEO Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

- 
- 
- 7 **Challenge:** Tybalt has challenged Romeo to a duel.  
12–13 **The very pin ... butt-shaft:** The bull's eye of his heart has been hit with Cupid's arrow.  
17 **Prick song:** Musical notation, a well-written song; Mercutio is being vulgar (punning on the word 'prick') and suggesting Tybalt is an accurate fighter.  
17–19 **Keeps time ... third in your bosom:** Musical language; he counts to two and then on the third beat, plunges a sword in your chest.  
20–21 **The immortal pasado! The punto reverso! The hai:** Different movements in a sword fight.  
23 **The pox:** The plague. Mercutio is cursing people who pretend to be something that they are not.  
23 **Affected fantasticoes:** Posers who speak in fake, posh accents.  
24–25 **Strange flies ... perdonami's:** Mercutio mocks rich people for being parasites who speak in false accents.

MERCUTIO The slip, sir, the slip; can you not conceive? 30  
 ROMEO Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and in such a case  
 as mine a man may strain courtesy.  
 MERCUTIO That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to  
 bow in the hams.  
 ROMEO Meaning, to curtsy. 35  
 MERCUTIO Thou hast most kindly hit it.  
 ROMEO A most courteous exposition.  
 MERCUTIO Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.  
 ROMEO Pink for flower.  
 MERCUTIO Right. 40  
 ROMEO Why, then is my pump well-flowered.  
 MERCUTIO Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou  
 sociable, now art thou Romeo.

*[NURSE and PETER enter]*

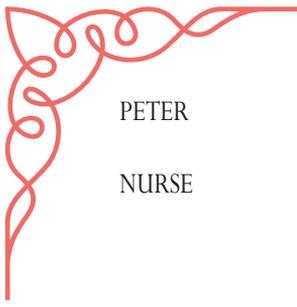
ROMEO Here's goodly gear! 45  
 MERCUTIO A sail, a sail!  
 BENVOLIO Two, two; a shirt and a smock.  
 NURSE Peter! My fan, Peter.  
 MERCUTIO Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer face.  
 NURSE Good morrow, gentlemen. Can any of you tell me where I may find  
 the young Romeo? 50  
 ROMEO I am the youngest of that name.  
 NURSE If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.  
 BENVOLIO *[To MERCUTIO]* She will indite him to some supper.  
 MERCUTIO A bawd, a bawd, a bawd – Romeo, will you come to your father's?  
 We'll to dinner, thither. 55  
 ROMEO I will follow you.  
 MERCUTIO Farewell, ancient lady; farewell, sweet lady.

*[MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO leave]*

NURSE Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this,  
 that was so full of his ropery?  
 ROMEO A gentleman, Nurse, that loves to hear himself talk, and will 60  
 speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month.  
 NURSE If he speak any thing against me, I'll take him down, if he were lustier  
 than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that  
 shall. Scurvy knave! – And thou must stand by too, and suffer every  
 knave to use me at his pleasure? 65

- 30 **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 sloop (clothes).
- 41 **Why, then is my pump well-flowered:** A rude play on words, meaning his shoes are patterned with flowers and also suggesting, perhaps a little unrealistically, at him being sexually active.
- 64 **Scurvy knave:** Rude and disgusting troublemaker.





PETER I saw no man use you at his pleasure; if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you.

NURSE Now, afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave! – Pray you, sir, a word: as I told you, my young lady bade me inquire you out; what she bade me say, I will keep to myself. But first let me tell you, if you 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. 70

ROMEO Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. Bid her devise some means to come to shrift this afternoon; and there she shall at Friar Laurence' cell be shrived and married. 75

NURSE This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.



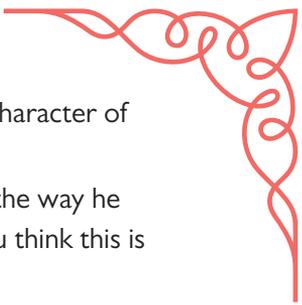
#### QUESTIONS

- 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 Mercutio's language is playful and humorous in this scene. See if you can find examples of when he:
  - a refers to the Nurse as ugly
  - b describes the Nurse as old.
- 4 **Alliteration** involves repeating the opening sound of a word, such as 'big blue bucket of bubbles'. See if you can find two examples of alliteration used by Mercutio which reinforce his playful use of language.



#### EXTEND

- 1 Even Benvolio does not understand everything Mercutio says when Mercutio mocks Tybalt. What do you think he is saying about Tybalt (lines 16–25)?
- 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 play with the words 'courtesy' (politeness) and 'curtsey' (bow at the knees).
  - Romeo boasts that his '*pump is well-flowered*' (referring to the pattern on his shoe but also suggesting perhaps that he has 'deflowered' many virgins).

- 
- 3 What might Shakespeare be intending to show us about the character of Mercutio by having him speak using so many puns?
  - 4 How is the language Romeo uses in this scene different from the way he spoke to Juliet or even the Friar in earlier scenes? Why do you think this is the case?

## 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 a **malapropism**.

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 meant 'pinnacle'] of politeness'. Shakespeare's characters were using malapropisms many years before they were given this name. Perhaps the best known example is Dogberry in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Malapropism occurs in Act 2 Scene 4 of *Romeo and Juliet*.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| NURSE    | Good morrow, gentlemen. Can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo? |
| ROMEO    | I am the youngest of that name.  |
| NURSE    | If you be he, sir, then I desire some confidence with you.                       |
| BENVOLIO | [To MERCUTIO] She will indite him to some supper.                                |

In line 52, the Nurse says 'confidence' when she means 'conference'. She does not use the wrong word on purpose. When Benvolio says 'She will indite him to some supper' instead of 'invite him to some 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 ever heard a younger person use a wrong word with 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 and tell her what Romeo has said. If you play Juliet, then you should consider how to express her frustration.
- Keep in mind that the Nurse is enjoying teasing Juliet, deliberately delaying telling her the exciting news.
- Before you read this scene, practise reading Juliet's final line (line 36):

**JULIET:** *Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell!*

The Nurse has kept you in suspense. You might like to deliver the line as if shocked and ecstatically happy, like you've just won the lottery; or in quiet amazement, as if you were still taking it all in. Remember that 'hie' means hurry.

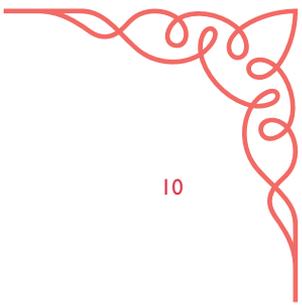
**Fie:** An expression of annoyance or disapproval  
**Jaunt:** A short trip  
**Perchance:** Maybe  
**Henceforward:** From now on

## The Capulet orchard.

JULIET           The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse;  
                      In half an hour she promised to return.  
                      Perchance she cannot meet him; that's not so.  
                      O God, she comes! O honey Nurse, what news?  
                      Now, good sweet Nurse – O Lord, why look'st thou sad?

NURSE           I am a-weary, give me leave awhile:  
                      Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt have I had!

5



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? 10  
Do you not see that I am out of breath?

JULIET How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath  
To say to me that thou art out of breath?  
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay  
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse. 15  
Is thy news good, or bad? Answer to that;  
Let me be satisfied: is't good or bad?

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! 20

JULIET In 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?

JULIET Where is my mother! Why, she is within; 25  
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? Is this the poultice for my aching  
bones? Henceforward do your messages yourself. 30

JULIET What says my love, my lord, my Romeo?

NURSE Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

JULIET I have.

NURSE Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell;  
There stays a husband to make you a wife. 35

JULIET Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell!



- 29 **Poultice:** Medicine or ointment applied with a cloth.  
36 **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? How does Shakespeare show this?
- 2 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 and their fatal flaws' on page 62, you can see that impatience is spread 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

How would you feel if you were Juliet and had been told that you would be married in the next hour or two?



*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 twenties.

It was common for rich parents to arrange early marriages for their children in order to protect their wealth and property. Sometimes these marriages were arranged shortly after the child's birth. Poorer people had more choice in who they married but still had to seek their parents' permission; this applied to both males and females. 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

Romeo and Juliet meet at Friar Laurence's cell 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 cell.

[FRIAR LAURENCE and ROMEO enter]

ROMEO 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.

FR. LAURENCE These violent delights have violent ends  
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,  
Which, as they kiss, consume: the sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness.  
Therefore, love moderately: long love doth so;  
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

5

[JULIET enters]

JULIET Romeo!

10

ROMEO All beauteous fairness dwelleth in thine eyes.  
Lead, holy father; all delay seems long.

JULIET Make haste, make haste; this lingering doth us wrong!

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

15



4-9 **These violent delights ... too slow:** Friar Laurence is advising Romeo and Juliet to slow down in their passion. He warns them 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.



15-16 **You shall not stay alone / Till holy church incorporate two in one:** Marriage, according to Genesis 2:24, is the joining of two separate lives into one family.



QUESTIONS

The Friar says, ‘the sweetest honey / Is loathsome in its own deliciousness’ (lines 6–7). What advice is he giving the couple?



EXTEND

In this brief scene, both Romeo and Juliet show signs of impatience or of rushing into things recklessly. Create a table like this one and add 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
Contrast of words, ideas and characters	‘swift’ and ‘slow’
Images	gunpowder

In the play, we never see the actual marriage take place – it is only hinted at. Why do you think Shakespeare made 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, and 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.

Read Act 2 Scene 6, lines 1–3. This is an early example of foreshadowing of the tragic ending to *Romeo and Juliet*.

- Q What does Romeo mean by what he says in these lines?
- Q What words or phrases seem unusual or out of place for a wedding?
- Q What do you imagine Shakespeare might be hinting at?
- Q Think of some other examples of foreshadowing evident so far in the play.

# Act 3

## Act 3 Scene 1

### CHARACTERS

Mercutio  
Benvolio  
Romeo  
Tybalt  
Prince  
Lady Capulet  
Montague  
[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 instead to defend Romeo's honour. 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, as a punishment, banishes Romeo from Verona.*

### Before you read

- If you play Mercutio, make sure you practise lines 10–18 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 meaning of words. Like a tongue twister, the lines are fast paced and quite difficult, but they are also humorous.
- 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 Tybalt, so he fights in Romeo's place.
- 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 Mercutio, you will need to think about how you might perform his lines (especially lines 64–73). You might shout some lines in anger, addressing everyone; others 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
- Effeminate:** Not masculine; being emotional or acting out of love
- Valour:** Bravery
- Hence:** Therefore
- Exile:** Being banished (thrown or locked out) from a place; Romeo is not allowed in Verona

## A public place.

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 his sword upon the table and says, 5  
'God send me no need of thee!' and by the second cup of wine  
draws it on the drawer, when indeed there is no need.

BENVOLIO Am I like such a fellow?

MERCUTIO Come, come, thou art as hot as any Jack in thy mood and as soon 10  
moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved. 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 15  
full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat: thou hast quarrelled with  
a man for coughing in the street because he hath wakened thy dog:  
and yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling!

BENVOLIO By my head, here come the Capulets.

MERCUTIO By my heel, I care not. 20

*[TYBALT and others enter]*

TYBALT Follow me close, for I will speak to them –  
Gentlemen, good day: 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, if you will give me occasion. 25

MERCUTIO Could you not take some occasion without giving?

TYBALT Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo –

MERCUTIO Consort! What, dost thou make us minstrels? If thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords: here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort! 30

BENVOLIO We talk here in the public haunt of men: Either withdraw unto some private place, And reason coldly of your grievances, Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

MERCUTIO Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze; I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I. 35

*[ROMEO enters]*

TYBALT Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man – Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford No better term than this: thou art a villain.

ROMEO Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee Doth much excuse the appertaining rage To such a greeting. Villain am I none; Therefore, farewell; I see thou know'st me not. 40

TYBALT Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries That thou hast done me. Therefore, turn and draw. 45

ROMEO I do protest, I never injured thee, But love thee better than thou canst devise, And so, good Capulet, which name I tender As dearly as my own, be satisfied.

MERCUTIO O calm, dishonourable, vile submission! 50

*[MERCUTIO draws his sword]*

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

TYBALT What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives!

TYBALT I am for you.

*[TYBALT draws his sword]*

ROMEO Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up. 55

MERCUTIO Come, sir, your passado.

*[MERCUTIO and TYBALT fight]*

28–30 **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 using music and dance).

30 **'Zounds:** Short for 'By His [Christ's] wounds' (a mild swear word or blasphemy in Elizabethan times).

41 **Appertaining rage:** Romeo is suggesting that he has every right to be angry at Tybalt's insult.

56 **Passado:** Swordplay term for a lunge.





ROMEO Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons.

*[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.

Is he gone, and hath nothing? 60

BENVOLIO What, art thou hurt?

MERCUTIO Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.

ROMEO Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

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. 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 of arithmetic! – Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. 65

ROMEO I thought all for the best. 70

MERCUTIO Help me into some house, Benvolio,

Or I shall faint. A plague on both your houses!

They have made worms' meat of me ... your houses ...

*[MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO exit]*

ROMEO This gentleman, the prince's near ally,  
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt  
On my behalf; my reputation stained  
With Tybalt's slander: Tybalt, that an hour  
Hath been my kinsman! O sweet Juliet,  
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate  
And in my temper softened valour's steel! 80

*[BENVOLIO re-enters]*

BENVOLIO O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!

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.

ROMEO Alive, in triumph! And Mercutio slain!  
So fire-eyed fury be my conduct now! 85

*[TYBALT re-enters]*

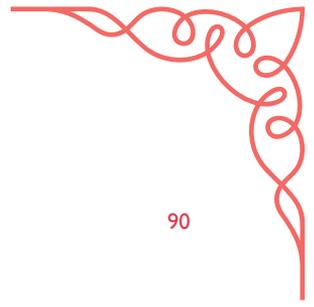
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68 **Fights by the book of arithmetic:** He fights very precisely (by timing and counting his strokes).

74 **The prince's near ally:** Mercutio is the Prince's cousin.

75 **Mortal hurt:** A wound that will kill him.

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



	Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again, That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul Is but a little way above our heads. Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.	90
TYBALT	Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here, Shalt with him hence.	
ROMEO	This shall determine that.	
<i>[ROMEO and TYBALT fight; TYBALT is killed]</i>		
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!	95
ROMEO	O, I am fortune's fool!	
<i>[ROMEO runs off, just before the PRINCE, his attendants, MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their Wives, and others enter]</i>		
PRINCE	Where are the vile beginners of this fray?	
BENVOLIO	O noble prince, I can discover all The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl. There lies the man, slain by young Romeo, That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.	100
L. CAPULET	Tybalt, my cousin! Prince, as thou art true, For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague. I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give: Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live.	105
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.	110
PRINCE	And for that offence Immediately we do exile him hence. 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.	115



114 **Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses:** Crying or praying will not be able to buy forgiveness.



#### QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is Benvolio worried at the beginning of the scene? Do you think he has reason to be worried?
- 2 What does Mercutio say about Benvolio? Are Mercutio's comments about Benvolio fair or accurate? Can you find evidence from earlier in the play that contradicts what he says?
- 3 When Romeo first arrives, what do we as an audience know that the other characters do not? Explain what literary technique Shakespeare uses here.
- 4 Why is Romeo unwilling to fight Tybalt? Why doesn't he tell everyone that he has just married Juliet?
- 5 Re-read the passage relating to Mercutio's death (lines 58–73).
  - 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 (funny), and some that are sad (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?



#### EXTEND

- 1 Romeo's character changes because of Mercutio's death. How does Shakespeare show the change in Romeo's character through the language Romeo uses?
- 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 62).
  - a What personal weakness seems to be spreading here?
  - b Do you think that Romeo hiding the truth 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? Do you think Romeo is right in saying, '*This day's black fate on more days doth depend; / This but begins the woe, others must end*' (lines 83–84)?
- 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 pages 123–24 for some ideas.



#### DISCUSS

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



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

- 1 Do you think he effectively captures the humour and pathos of the scene?
- 2 What cinematic devices does he use to make this scene powerful and emotive (moving)?
- 3 Could he have done it differently? How?



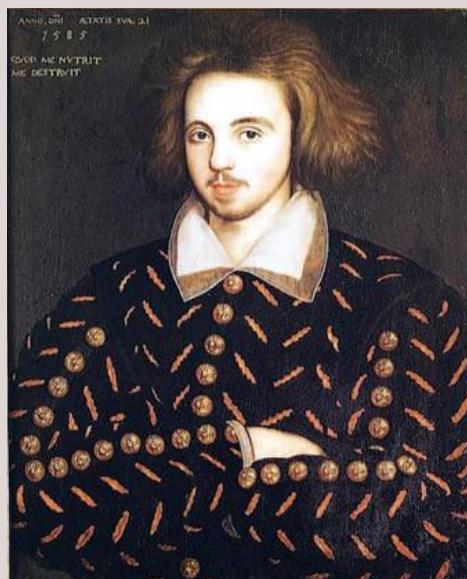
### *Brave Mercutio's dead!*

## 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. Because of this and some other strange details, many people 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.*

### Before you read

- In lines 1–19 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? Softly and slowly? Quickly and loudly?
- 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, as Juliet is overwhelmed by the bad news.

V

- Piteous:** Perhaps tender or more likely something that produces pity or sadness
- Bedaubed:** Covered or plastered
- Swounded:** Swooned or fainted
- Rear-ward:** Following right behind, the very next thing that happens
- Hark ye:** You listen (to me)

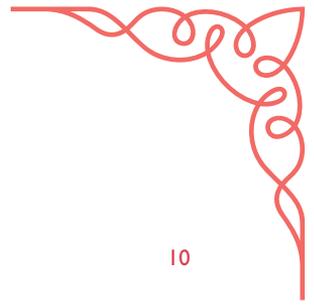
## Capulet's orchard.

JULIET            Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
                          And bring in cloudy night immediately.  
                          Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night;  
                          For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night,  
                          Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.

5



**Gallop apace:** Travel quickly.



Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-browed night,  
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,  
Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
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.  
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  
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.

10

15

[NURSE enters]

NURSE      Ay me! What news? Why dost thou wring thy hands?  
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!

20

JULIET      Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!  
What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?  
If he be slain, say 'I'; or if not, 'No'.

25

NURSE      I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes.  
A piteous corpse, a bloody piteous corpse;  
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood,  
All in gore-blood; I swoounded at the sight.

30

JULIET      O, break, my heart! Poor bankrupt, break at once!

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 dear-loved cousin and my dearer lord?

35

NURSE      Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banishèd;  
Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd.

JULIET      O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

40

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?



11      **Garish:** Annoyingly bright.

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





- 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	Example (quote or quotes)	How does this show Juliet's longing for Romeo?
Images of speed		
Repeated words		
Images of impatience		

- 2 Create a table similar to the one below for your notes to show how Juliet feels once she finds out that Romeo has been banished for killing Tybalt.

Literary device	Examples or quotations from the text
<b>Oxymoron</b> , showing Juliet's confusion and grief	
Continually asking <b>questions</b> , revealing her confusion	
<b>Repetition of words</b> , conveying that Juliet is distraught	
Other techniques?	



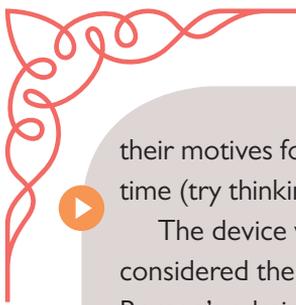
- Some critics believe that the Nurse is genuine in her sorrow in this scene, while others argue that she is being melodramatic or over-the-top. What do you think? Give some evidence to support your answer.

## A word about soliloquy

You are probably familiar with television soap operas, with their predictable plots and abundance of plastic 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-li-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 doing what they are doing or plan to do. We talk to ourselves all the time (try thinking without language) and soliloquies reflect this.

The device was used by some playwrights before Shakespeare but he is generally considered the first writer to genuinely capture the inner workings of the human mind. Romeo's admiration of Juliet and perhaps Juliet's speech in the balcony scene (Act 2 Scene 2) might be described as soliloquies, even though the actors are not alone and Romeo hears what Juliet is saying. Here in Act 3 Scene 2, Juliet speaks her mind. No-one else is around and we as an audience catch a glimpse of her impatience and excitement.

There are very few soliloquies in *Romeo and Juliet* but other Shakespeare plays (such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*) use the device much more often.

## Act 3 Scene 3

### CHARACTERS

Friar Laurence  
Romeo  
Nurse  
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions and do the 'knocking']

### IN A NUTSHELL

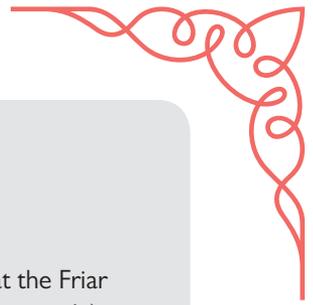
Romeo is overcome by grief at being banished from Juliet's presence, and he hides in Friar Laurence's cell. Here he argues with the Friar about how bad his circumstances are. When the Nurse arrives, she tells them of Juliet's similar grief. Finally, the Friar gives Romeo reason to hope and sends him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

### Before you read

- In this scene, it is Romeo's turn to be overcome by grief. Take note of 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.
- Friar Laurence is absolutely frustrated with Romeo and this should be expressed in the way lines 58 onwards are delivered.



- Enamoured:** Delighted by or, in this case, attracted to
- Doomsday:** The end of the world
- Calamity:** Disaster or misfortune
- Philosophy:** Wisdom or advice
- Sullen wench:** A stubborn, low-life woman (this also suggests that the Friar believes Romeo is behaving like a woman, not being manly)



## Friar Laurence's cell.

FR. LAURENCE    Romeo, come forth; come forth, thou fearful man:  
 Affliction is enamoured of thy parts  
 And thou art wedded to calamity.

*[ROMEO enters]*

	I bring thee tidings of the prince's doom.	
ROMEO	What less than doomsday is the prince's doom?	5
FR. LAURENCE	A gentler judgment vanished from his lips, Not body's death, but body's banishment.	
ROMEO	Ha, banishment! Be merciful, say 'death'; For exile hath more terror in his look Much more than death. Do not say 'banishment'.	10
FR. LAURENCE	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!	15
FR. LAURENCE	O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness! This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not.	
ROMEO	'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here, Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog And little mouse, every unworthy thing, Live here in heaven and may look on her. They are free men, but I am banishèd.	20
FR. LAURENCE	Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.	
ROMEO	O, thou wilt speak again of banishment!	
FR. LAURENCE	I'll give thee armour to keep off that word: Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy, To comfort thee, though thou art banishèd.	25
ROMEO	Yet 'banishèd'? Hang up philosophy!	



**13 Purgatory:** Where people are believed to suffer for their sins after death (a waiting place in between earth and heaven).



Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,  
 Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom; 30  
 It helps not, it prevails not: talk no more.

FR. LAURENCE O, then I see that madmen have no ears.  
 ROMEO How should they, when that wise men have no eyes?

FR. LAURENCE Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.  
 ROMEO Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel. 35

*[Knocking]*

FR. LAURENCE Arise; one knocks; good Romeo, hide thyself.

*[Knocking]*

Hark, how they knock! – Who's there? – Romeo, arise!

*[Knocking]*

Who knocks so hard? – Whence come you? What's your will?

NURSE *[Within]* I come from Lady Juliet.

FR. LAURENCE Welcome, then.

*[NURSE enters]*

NURSE O holy Friar, O, tell me, holy Friar, 40  
 Where is my lady's lord? Where's Romeo?

FR. 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, 45  
 Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering.  
 Stand up, stand up; stand, if you be a man!

ROMEO Nurse!

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

ROMEO Spakest thou of Juliet? How is it with her? 50

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.

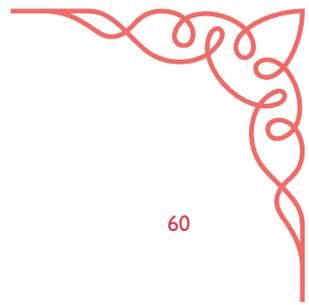
ROMEO O, tell me, Friar, 55  
 In what vile part of this anatomy  
 Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack  
 The hateful mansion.

*[ROMEO draws his sword, threatening to kill himself]*



30 **Displant a town:** Move a town, like tearing a plant up by the roots; in this case, to move Verona to Mantua.

55 **Anatomy:** Body.



FR. LAURENCE

Hold thy desperate hand:

Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art:  
Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote  
The unreasonable fury of a beast!

60

What, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive:  
There art thou happy; Tybalt would kill thee,  
But thou slew'st Tybalt: there are thou happy too;  
The law that threatened death becomes thy friend  
And turns it to exile: there art thou happy.

65

A pack of blessings lights upon thy back;  
But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,  
Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love:  
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.

70

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,

75

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:

80

Romeo is coming.

NURSE

O lord, what a thing learning is! I could  
Have stayed here all the night to hear good counsel.  
Well, sir, I'll tell my lady you will come.

*[NURSE starts to go but turns back]*

ROMEO Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

85

NURSE Here is a ring she bade me give you, sir:  
Hie you; make haste, for it grows very late.

*[NURSE exits]*

ROMEO How well my comfort is revived by this!

FR. LAURENCE Sojourn in Mantua; I'll find out your man,  
And he shall signify from time to time

90

Every good hap to you that chances here:  
Give me thy hand. 'Tis late: farewell; good night.



89 **Sojourn in Mantua:** Journey to and have a rest in Mantua.

90–91 **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 an insistent knocking at the door. How does this knocking help to build the tension in this scene?



EXTEND

- 1 Note that the Nurse says Romeo is just like Juliet, using six simple words to describe them: ‘*blubbing and weeping, weeping and blubbing*’. How does the order of these words (or the **syntax**) show that Romeo and Juliet are **mirroring** or identical to each other?
- 2 Notice how both the Friar and the Nurse ask if Romeo is ‘*a man*’. To what two things do they compare him? Why do you think they do this?
- 3 This scene ends positively. How does Shakespeare use the following aspects (literary devices) to create this positive ending? Create a table similar to the one below for your notes.

Device	Examples	How does this device help to create a positive ending to this scene?
<b>Positive words</b>	'blessings', 'happiness', 'sweet', 'joy', 'comfort'	
<b>Hyperbole</b> (use of exaggeration)		
<b>Contrast</b> in tone or feeling to the beginning of the scene		This scene begins ... but ends ...

## Introducing hyperbole

**Hyperbole** (*hy-per-bo-lee*) involves using a deliberately exaggerated statement to emphasise a point. It is a figure of speech and is not to be taken literally. Imagine something dreadful happens, so you scream, ‘*It’s the end of the world!*’ It’s not literally the end of the world but we know what you mean: you are deliberately exaggerating to let us know that you are upset.

In the previous scene (Act 3 Scene 2), Juliet was so upset in her grief over Romeo’s banishment that she was hysterical. This was reflected in the exaggerated language she used:

JULIET: 'Romeo is banished'; to speak that word  
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,  
All slain, all dead ...

In Act 3 Scene 3, Romeo's grief is very similar to Juliet's. Romeo's language, like Juliet's, is riddled with hyperbole. He deliberately exaggerates to let us know the intensity of his pain.



*Ha, banishment! Be merciful, say 'death' ...*

## Banishment and other punishments



*Illustration by George Cruikshank 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 which 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 stop others from committing similar crimes.

Although there were 18 prisons in London, most were holding places for criminals before a court date, 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 women guilty of gossiping. Drunkards were sometimes forced to squat in a specially designed barrel called a drunkard's cloak, and the public were encouraged to jeer at or insult them.



# Act 3 Scene 4

## CHARACTERS

Capulet  
Paris  
Lady Capulet



## IN A NUTSHELL

*In this very brief scene, Capulet promises Paris that he can marry Juliet on Thursday, in just three days.*

### Before you read

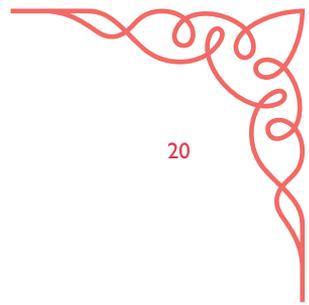
- Keep in mind that Capulet, as leader of the household, is a powerful and proud man who is very sure of himself. He also tends to think aloud and he can be a little scatty or forgetful.



**Woo:** Try to win the heart of someone or win them over  
**Mewed:** Locked up or confined

## A room in Capulet's house.

CAPULET 'Tis very late, she'll not come down tonight.  
PARIS These times of woe afford no time to woo.  
Madam, good night. Commend me to your daughter.  
L. CAPULET I will, and know her mind early tomorrow;  
Tonight she's mewed up to her heaviness. 5  
CAPULET Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender  
Of my child's love: I think she will be ruled  
In all respects by me; nay, more, I doubt it not.  
Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed;  
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love; 10  
And bid her, mark you me, on Wednesday next –  
But, soft! – What day is this?  
PARIS Monday, my lord,  
CAPULET Monday! Ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon.  
On Thursday let it be: on Thursday, tell her,  
She shall be married to this noble earl. 15  
Will you be ready? Do you like this haste?  
We'll keep no great ado – a friend or two;  
For, hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,



It may be thought we held him carelessly,  
 Being our kinsman, if we revel much:  
 Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends  
 And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?  
 My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.  
 Well get you gone: on Thursday be it, then.  
 Good night.

20

25

PARIS  
 CAPULET



- 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.

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.	



The audience knows more than Capulet about what has recently happened. Why then is it ironic (strangely at odds with reality) that Capulet believes Juliet is grieving over Tybalt's death?



# 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 is banished from the city of Verona. Juliet's parents inform her of the wedding to Paris in three days' time and Juliet strongly protests. A heated argument follows and Capulet threatens to disown Juliet. When her Nurse recommends marrying Paris, Juliet plans to ask the Friar's advice.

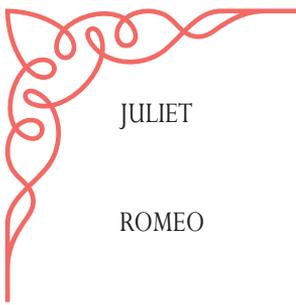
### Before you read

- 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 debate whether the bird they hear is a nightingale (a bird of the night) or the lark (a bird of early morning). Note how Juliet tries to persuade Romeo to stay, but is quickly worried for his life.
- After Romeo leaves, there is much fiery passion as Juliet and her parents start to lose control. The conversation that they have is not a casual conversation between daughter and parents – it 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.



<b>Jocund:</b>	Light-hearted or joyful
<b>Conduit:</b>	A fountain
<b>Fie:</b>	Exclamation expressing disgust
<b>Beshrew:</b>	Curse





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.

ROMEO *[Looking up to JULIET]* Farewell!  
I will omit no opportunity 35  
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

JULIET O God, I have an ill-divining soul!  
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,  
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb:  
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale. 40

ROMEO And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:  
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu!

*[ROMEO exits]*

JULIET O fortune, fortune! All men call thee fickle:  
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him  
That is renowned for faith? Be fickle, fortune; 45  
For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,  
But send him back.

L. CAPULET *[LADY CAPULET enters]* Ho, daughter! Are you up?  
Why, how now, Juliet!

JULIET Madam, I am not well.

L. CAPULET Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?  
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears? 50

JULIET Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

L. CAPULET Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death,  
As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.

JULIET What villain, madam?

L. CAPULET That same villain, Romeo.

JULIET *[Aside]* Villain and he be many miles asunder – 55  
God Pardon him! I do, with all my heart;  
And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

L. CAPULET That is, because the traitor murderer lives.

JULIET Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands:  
Would none but I might venge my cousin's death! 60

L. CAPULET We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not:  
Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.  
But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

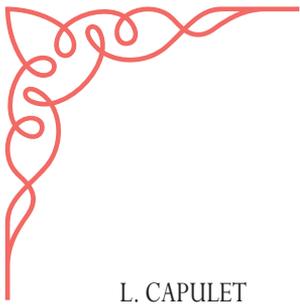


42 **Adieu:** Affectionate French word for goodbye.

55 **Miles asunder:** Separated by many miles.

62 **Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man:** If you lay hold of some poison, I'll find someone to give it to Romeo.





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. 100  
 Out, you green-sickness carrion! Out, you baggage!  
 You tallow-face!

L. 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! 105  
 I tell thee what: get thee to church on Thursday,  
 Or never after look me in the face.  
 Speak not, reply not, do not answer me –  
 My fingers itch.

NURSE May God in heav'n bless her!  
 You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so. 110

CAPULET And why, my lady wisdom? Hold your tongue!  
 L. CAPULET You are too hot.

CAPULET God's bread! It makes me mad:  
 To have her matched and having now provided  
 A gentleman of noble parentage,  
 Stuffed, as they say, with honourable parts, 115  
 Proportioned as one's thought would wish a man;  
 And then to have a wretched puling fool,  
 A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,  
 To answer 'I'll not wed; I cannot love,  
 I am too young; I pray you, pardon me.' 120  
 Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise:  
 If you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;  
 If you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,  
 For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee.

*[CAPULET storms out]*



- 98 **But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next:** Just prepare yourself for next Thursday's action in the bedroom.
- 100 **Drag thee on a hurdle thither:** I will drag you there on a cart like you are a criminal going to be executed.
- 101 **Green-sickness carrion:** Anemic or diseased piece of flesh (an insult).
- 101 **Out, you baggage:** An insult, equivalent of saying, Get out, you cheap hussy.
- 102 **Tallow-face:** Another insult, meaning greasy face or pale-faced (tallow is beef fat).
- 112 **God's bread:** A mild swear word or blasphemy relating to Communion bread.
- 117 **Puling:** Crying or whinging.
- 118 **Mammet:** Doll or puppet.

JULIET O, sweet my mother, cast me not away! 125  
 Delay this marriage for a month, a week;  
 Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed  
 In that dim monument where Tybalt lies!

L. CAPULET Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word: 130  
 Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.

[LADY CAPULET exits]

JULIET O God! – O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?  
 What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?

NURSE I think it best you married with the county.  
 O, he's a lovely gentleman!  
 Romeo's a dishclout to him. Hear my heart: 135  
 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.

JULIET Speak'st thou from thy heart?

NURSE And from my soul too;  
 Or else beshrew them both. 140

JULIET Amen!

NURSE What?

JULIET Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.  
 Go in: and tell my lady I am gone,  
 Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,  
 To make confession and to be absolved.

NURSE Marry, I will; and this is wisely done. 145

[NURSE exits]

JULIET Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend! –  
 I'll to the Friar, to know his remedy;  
 If all else fails, myself have power to die!



144 **Absolved:** Forgiven.



QUESTIONS

- 1 How do Romeo and Juliet feel about parting? Give evidence from this scene.
- 2 Why do you think that Juliet tells her mother that she wishes Romeo was 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: e.g. '... day / away, grows / woes, about / out, descend / friend'. Can you think why Shakespeare might write like this, Romeo and Juliet completing each other's lines or using **rhyming couplets**?

- 5 Create a table similar to the one below for your notes, to show the anger or the fiery passion of Capulet in this scene.

Capulet's anger / fiery passion is seen in ...	Evidence from Act 3 Scene 5
The words he uses	
Other characters' reaction to him	
The punctuation attached to his words	
His implied actions (look at 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'.
- Why is she going to him for advice?
  - What do you think his advice might be?



- When did Romeo first speak of 'envy' and 'yonder east'? Why do you think Shakespeare would wish to remind the audience of this?
- Shakespeare has Romeo and Juliet using the words '*die ... dead ... tomb ... blood*' quite often in this scene. What might this be **foreshadowing** (hinting at) that might happen later in the play?
- Both Romeo and Juliet keep using images of nature and music. Make a brief list of these images and discuss what they tell us about Romeo and Juliet's love for each other.
- What seems strange about Juliet saying to her mother, '*I wonder at this haste*' (line 76)?
- How does the idea of a 'remedy' fit in with the major theme of base emotions spreading like poison and resulting in tragedy?



- The Nurse advises Juliet to marry Paris. Is this helpful advice? Do you think she is being a true friend?
- Sometimes television shows end with what is known as a 'cliffhanger', where the drama or tension is high and we have 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?



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

- How does each film version show the fiery passion of this scene? Think about such cinematic devices as the camera work, soundtrack and lighting.
- Which film 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. Juliet enters, hiding her distress and avoiding 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 trick everyone into thinking she is dead.*

### Before you read

- Friar Laurence and Juliet are particularly stressed about the marriage in this scene but must hide this from Paris.
- Note the use of imagery in this scene relating to poison and medicine. This adds to our understanding of the Friar's speech of Act 2 Scene 3: now we see the characters' fatal flaws spreading throughout Verona like poison spreads through the body.

V

**Inundation:** Flood or overflowing

**Surcease:** Stop or end



## Friar Laurence's cell.

*[FRIAR LAURENCE and PARIS enter; they are midway through a conversation]*

FR. 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.

FR. 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.  
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous  
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway,  
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage, 10  
To stop the inundation of her tears.

FR. LAURENCE Look, sir, here comes the lady towards 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. 15

JULIET What must be shall be.

FR. 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 *[To FRIAR LAURENCE]* Are you at leisure, holy father, now, 20  
Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

FR. LAURENCE My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now –  
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

PARIS God shield I should disturb devotion!

Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse thee. 25  
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!

FR. LAURENCE Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief; 30  
It strains me past the compass of my wits.

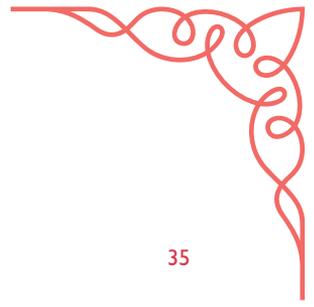
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3 **I am nothing slow to slack his haste:** I don't want to slow him down – I'm all for hurrying, too.

22 **Pensive:** Sorrowful, anxious.

23 **Entreat the time alone:** Request or beg to spend time alone (with Juliet).

30 **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.



JULIET Tell me not, Friar, that thou hear'st of this,  
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it:  
If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,  
Do thou but call my resolution wise,  
And with this knife I'll help it presently. 35  
Be not so long to speak; I long to die!

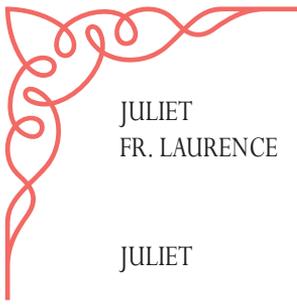
FR. LAURENCE Hold, daughter: I do spy a kind of hope,  
Which craves as desperate an execution.  
If, rather than to marry County Paris,  
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself, 40  
Then is it likely thou wilt undertake  
A thing like death to chide away this shame,  
And, if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy.

JULIET O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,  
From off the battlements of any tower; 45  
And I will do it without fear or doubt,  
To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

FR. LAURENCE Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent  
To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow:  
Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone; 50  
Let not thy Nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.  
Take thou this vial, being then in bed,  
And this distillèd liquor drink thou off;  
When presently through all thy veins shall run  
A cold and drowsy humour, for no pulse 55  
Shall keep his native progress, but surcease:  
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou liv'st;  
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death  
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,  
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep. 60  
Now, when the bridegroom in the morning comes  
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead.  
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault  
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.  
In the mean time, just before thou shalt awake, 65  
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift,  
And hither shall he come: and he and I  
Will watch thy waking, and that very night  
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.



- 
- 38 **Desperate an execution:** Putting into action a desperate plan.  
42 **To chide away this shame:** To help yourself escape from this terrible (even shameful) situation.  
55–56 **No pulse / Shall keep his native progress:** No-one will be able to feel your pulse.  
63 **Borne:** Carried.

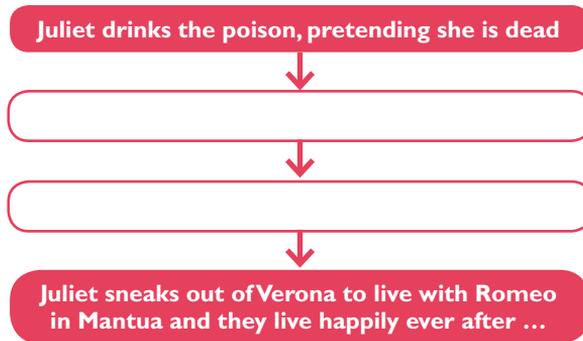


JULIET            Give me, give me! O, tell not me of fear!  
 FR. LAURENCE    Hold; get you gone, be strong and prosperous  
                           In this resolve: I'll send a Friar with speed  
                           To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.  
 JULIET            Love give me strength! Farewell, dear Father!



QUESTIONS

- 1 Quote some of Juliet's lines or phrases that are examples of **hyperbole**. For an explanation of hyperbole, see page 90.
- 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? How does this help Juliet avoid having to retell what has happened (lines 29–31)?
- 2 This scene continues a **major theme**: deception leads to misunderstanding and results in tragedy. Create a table similar to the one below for your notes.

What deception is discussed in the second half of this scene?	
See if you can predict how this deception might lead to misunderstanding.	
Finally, what tragedy might result from the deception and misunderstanding?	



DISCUSS

Can you think of an alternative plan or solution to Juliet's problem? Explain why your alternative solution is better than the Friar's plan.



PRESS PLAY

If time allows, view the Zeffirelli and Luhrmann versions of this scene. Pay close attention to the actor who is not speaking. Discuss what he or she is doing when listening to the character who is speaking.

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 liv'st ...*

## Where did Shakespeare get the idea for this drug?



*The Apothecary, sixteenth-century German woodcut*

There were some very basic anaesthetics in Shakespeare's day but we still don't have a drug or potion that would give a 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. The couple are married 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 which 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

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

### Before you read

- Juliet must pretend to be the obedient daughter, happy to marry Paris in the morning. Her lines should be delivered politely.
- Whoever reads or plays Capulet needs to realise that he is impatient and demanding. Notice all the commands he issues!



**Peevish:** Spiteful and irritable  
**Gadding:** Wandering around on a fun adventure, basically wasting time  
**Becomèd:** Suitable or appropriate

## Hall in Capulet's house.

CAPULET So many guests invite as here are writ.

[1<sup>ST</sup> SERVANT exits]

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.

[2<sup>ND</sup> SERVANT exits]

We shall be much unfurnished for this time.

What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

NURSE Ay, forsooth.

CAPULET Well, he may chance to do some good on her:

A peevish self-willed harlotry it is.

5



5 **Ay, forsooth:** Yes, it is true.

7 **A peevish self-willed harlotry it is:** She is a bad-tempered, selfish, cheap bimbo.

NURSE See where she comes from shrift with merry look.

*[JULIET enters]*

CAPULET How now, my headstrong! Where have you been gadding?

JULIET Where I have learned me to repent the sin 10

Of disobedient opposition

To you and your behests, and am enjoined

By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,

And beg your pardon: pardon, I beseech you!

Henceforward I am ever ruled by you. 15

CAPULET Send for the county; go tell him of this:

I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning.

Now, afore God! This reverend holy Friar,

All our whole city is much bound to him.

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? 20

*[JULIET and NURSE exit]*

L. CAPULET We shall be short in our provision:

'Tis now near night.

CAPULET Tush, I will stir about, 25

And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife:

Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her;

I'll not to bed tonight; let me alone;

I'll play the housewife for this once. What, ho!

They are all forth. Well, I will walk myself

To County Paris, to prepare him up 30

Against tomorrow: my heart is wondrous light,

Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed.



12 **Behests:** Requests or commands.

12 **Enjoined:** Commanded or ordered.

13 **Fall prostrate:** Fall on the ground at someone's feet (showing respect and obedience).

17 **I'll have this knot knit up:** I'll finalise all the details of this marriage.

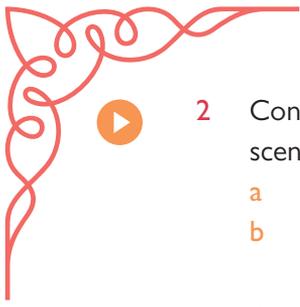
25 **Tush:** A mild rebuke, something like 'nonsense'.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What is Capulet's view of Juliet in the early stages of this scene (lines 1–9)?  
Do you think his opinion of her changes during the course of the scene?





- 2 Consider the sense of rushed excitement or chaos at the beginning of 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 you use to help create a sense of chaos or excitement?
- 3 Remember that, throughout the play, deception spreads like poison or as 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 created (evoked) 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 Act 4 Scene 2? What do you think creates this mood?

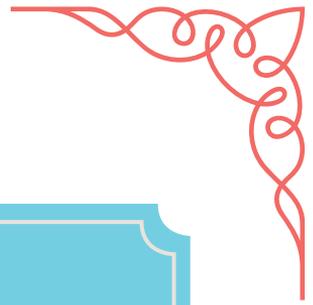


- I Consider for a moment the way Shakespeare presents Capulet in this scene. In your answer discuss Capulet's language, his use of repetition and how he is in contrast to his wife. Create a table similar to the one below for your notes.

What does Capulet's language (short and abrupt sentences, his giving commands and the use of exclamation marks) reveal about his character?	
What does his use of repetition tell us about him? Look at words and phrases that he repeats.	
How does the way Capulet behaves contrast to his wife? Does this make his character more obvious to us?	

- 2 How does Shakespeare use dramatic irony in this scene to build tension or the expectations of the reader? Think about the previous scenes and 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 poison, which she eventually does.*

### Before you read

- In this tense scene, particularly lines 12–31, Juliet contemplates whether or not to drink Friar Laurence’s potion.
- Note carefully that lines 14 and 16 are irregular: they do not have the usual ten syllables. There should be a pause, a break in the rhythm, perhaps to give Juliet time to examine the vial and to contemplate her decision.
- Juliet is in two minds whether or not to go ahead with the Friar’s plan. Her state of anxiety increases throughout this scene, which should be reflected in the way Juliet’s part is performed or read.



**Attires:** Clothes  
**Orisons:** Prayers

## Juliet’s chamber.

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

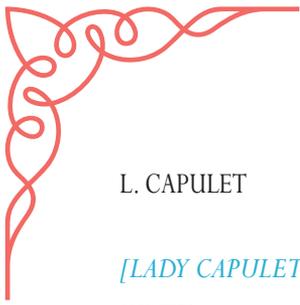
[LADY CAPULET enters]

L. CAPULET    What, are you busy now? Need you my help?  
JULIET            So please you, let me now be left alone,  
And let the Nurse this night sit up with you;



4

**State:** Anxious or nervous condition.



For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,  
In this so sudden business.

L. CAPULET

Good night:

10

Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

*[LADY CAPULET and NURSE exit]*

JULIET

Farewell – God knows when we shall meet again.

I'll call them back again to comfort me –

Nurse! – What should she do here?

My dismal scene I needs must act alone.

15

Come, vial.

What if this mixture do not work at all?

What if it be a poison, which the Friar

Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,

Lest in this marriage he should be dishonoured,

20

Because he married me before to Romeo?

I fear it is; and yet, methinks, it should not,

For he hath still been tried a holy man.

How if, when I am laid into the tomb,

I wake before the time that Romeo

25

Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point!

Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault?

O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,

Environèd with all these hideous fears?

And madly play with my forefathers' joints?

30

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 –

Romeo, I come! This do I drink to thee.

35

*[JULIET drinks from the vial and falls upon her bed]*



18–19 **What if it be a poison, which the Friar / Subtly hath ministered:** What if the Friar has sneakily given me poison?

23 **Stifled:** Suffocated.

25 **Environèd with:** Surrounded by.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What reason does Juliet give for believing that the Friar might poison her? Why does she decide against this reason in the end?
- 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?



Shakespeare shows Juliet's state of mind through various elements of language; Question 2 (on the previous page) points out one way. Construct a table like the one below for your notes to help you focus on other aspects of Juliet's language:

Element of language	Examples from the scene	What do these language devices show us about Juliet's state of mind?
Punctuation and short sentence length	Numerous question marks, exclamation marks and short sentences	
Interruption to the rhythm of the language (iambic pentameter)	See lines 14 and 16	
Gruesome imagery	<i>'madly play with my forefathers' joints'</i> <i>'dash out my desperate brains'</i>	
Harsh sounding, negative words	<i>'stifled ... pluck ... mangled'</i>	



You might take some time to compare the Zeffirelli and Luhrmann 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 were successfully able to include specific **cinematic devices** (such as sound, lighting and camera work) to enhance 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).

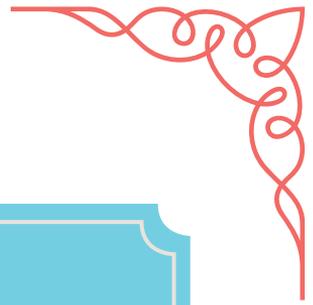
Rich Elizabethans also loved banquets, and saw them as opportunities to show off their wealth. An English banquet usually included a great deal of seafood, such as crabs, salmon, trout and eel. Pastries and tarts were also popular. The sweeter dishes were sometimes served before the savoury and might include jellies, pears with caraway, wafers, fritters and dried fruits. The tables were richly decorated and the centrepiece 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, stews and cheaper kinds of fish.

People would eat with a spoon and their own knife. While forks were popular in Europe, people in England thought them strange and they were not widely used until over 100 years after Shakespeare's death.



*Seventeenth-century painting of a banquet, by Hieronymus Francken II*

# Act 4 Scene 4



CHARACTERS	IN A NUTSHELL
Capulet Lady Capulet Nurse Servants <i>[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]</i>	<i>Everyone in the Capulet household is frantically running around at three o'clock in the morning preparing their house for the wedding.</i>

## Before you read

- You might have noticed the dramatic mood changes between the scenes. Keep this in mind, particularly in Scenes 4 and 5 of Act 4, which are an emotional roller-coaster.
- This scene is quite humorous or light-hearted. Consider how Capulet might repeat the words, 'Make haste!' He is issuing many instructions and servants will need to hurry in and out.

<b>V</b>	<b>Mouse-hunt:</b>	A man who runs after women
	<b>Jealous hood:</b>	A jealous woman

## Hall in the Capulet house.

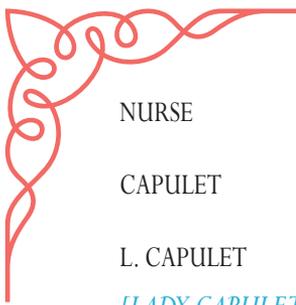
*[LADY CAPULET and NURSE enter, in a hurry, followed by three or four servants, who are carrying spits, logs and baskets]*

L. 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!  
Look to the baked meats, good Angelica:  
Spare not for the cost.

5



NURSE

Go, you cot-queen, go,

Get you to bed; faith, you'll be sick tomorrow.

CAPULET

No, not a whit – what! I have watched ere now  
All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

L. CAPULET

Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your time.

10

*[LADY CAPULET and NURSE exit]*

CAPULET

A jealous hood, a jealous hood! What's there?

1<sup>ST</sup> SERVANT

Things for the cook, sir; but I know not what.

CAPULET

Make haste, make haste.

*[1<sup>ST</sup> SERVANT exits]*

Sirrah, fetch drier logs:

Call Peter; he will show thee where they are.

*[2<sup>ND</sup> SERVANT exits]*

Good faith, 'tis day; the county will be here,  
For so he said he would: I hear him near.

15

*[Music is heard from within]*

Nurse! Wife, I say! Go waken Juliet.

Make haste; the bridegroom he is come already:

Make haste, I say.

*[CAPULET rushes out]*



6

**Cot-queen:** Old woman or a man who does housework traditionally associated with women.

8

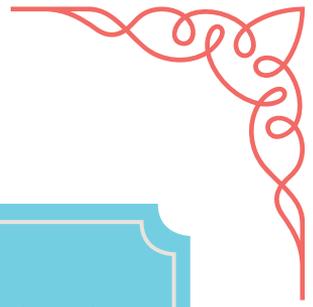
**Not a whit:** Not at all, not a bit.



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 are both very serious. Why do you think Shakespeare chose to place this light-hearted, humorous scene between two serious scenes? What purpose do you think it serves?

# Act 4 Scene 5



## CHARACTERS

Friar Laurence  
Nurse  
Capulet  
Lady Capulet  
Paris



## 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 her body. Paris enters with Friar Laurence, who eventually calms everyone involved and advises them to begin making preparations for Juliet's funeral.*

### Before you read

- Take note of all the repetition in this scene. Everyone is extraordinarily upset and seems to repeat the same things over and over again.
- Keep in mind the abundant use of exclamation marks! They highlight the very emotional response to finding Juliet dead. Could it be that Shakespeare has his characters seem so melodramatic in their grief to remind us that she is only pretending? See what you think ...



<b>Lamentable:</b>	Extremely sad, worth crying over
<b>Melancholy bells:</b>	Bells playing funeral music
<b>Lour:</b>	To frown on

## Juliet's chamber.

*[NURSE enters]*

NURSE            Why, lamb! Why, lady! Fie, you slug-a-bed!  
                      Why, love, I say! Madam! Sweet-heart! Why, bride!  
                      What, not a word?

*[NURSE undraws the curtains]*

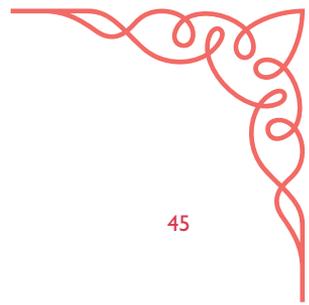
                      What, dressed! And in your clothes! And down again!  
                      I must needs wake you; Lady! Lady! Lady!  
                      Alas, alas! Help, help! My lady's dead!

5

*[LADY CAPULET rushes in]*

L. CAPULET        What noise is here?  
NURSE                O lamentable day!





FR. LAURENCE    Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure lives not  
 In these confusions. Heaven and yourself  
 Had part in this fair maid; now heaven hath all,  
 And all the better is it for the maid: 45  
 And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced  
 Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?  
 Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary  
 On this fair corpse; and, as the custom is,  
 In all her best array bear her to church. 50

CAPULET        All things that we ordained festival,  
 Turn from their office to black funeral;  
 Our instruments to melancholy bells,  
 Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast,  
 Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change, 55  
 Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corpse,  
 And all things change them to the contrary.

FR. LAURENCE    So 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. 60



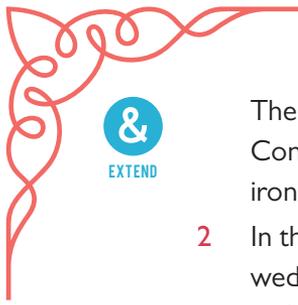
- 55    **Solemn hymns to sullen dirges change:** Our songs of celebration have become depressing funeral songs.
- 60    **Move them no more by crossing their high will:** Don't look to contradict heavenly powers that are greater than you.



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 totally 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. ' <i>Alas, alas!</i> ')	
Emotive language (e.g. ' <i>woe</i> ', ' <i>lamentable</i> ', ' <i>alack</i> ')	
The punctuation and short sentences	



The deception in this scene continues to be spread through the Friar. 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 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 (53)	Melancholy bells (53)

- 3 Why do you think Shakespeare is using the literary technique of contrast here? What is he trying to show by using it?
- 4 The Friar claims here that the Capulets are being punished by 'the heavens' (fate). Turn back to the Prologue and see if you can work out the answers to the following.
  - a What might 'the heavens' be punishing the Capulets for?
  - b Quote at least two phrases or lines from the Prologue that might be evidence for your previous answer.



- 1 Which of the characters in this scene do you feel most sympathetic towards? Why?
- 2 Remember: Juliet is not dead – she is only pretending! 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.

# Act 5

## Act 5 Scene 1

### CHARACTERS

Romeo  
Balthasar  
Apothecary



### IN A NUTSHELL

*Waking up, Romeo recalls that he has dreamed of Juliet. Balthasar arrives with the news of Juliet's death and Romeo plans to return to Verona to die beside her. While Balthasar goes off to hire horses for their journey back to Verona, Romeo buys poison from a poor apothecary.*

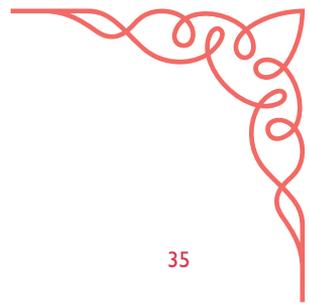
### Before you read

- 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) has missed 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!

V

- Flattering:** Pleasing
- Presage:** Give a sign or warning of something
- Tush:** Usually a mild expression of rebuke or disgust, but here Romeo is unlikely to deliver it mildly
- Apothecary:** Chemist or pharmacist





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  
 In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,  
 Culling of simples; meagre were his looks,  
 Sharp misery had worn him to the bones:  
 And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
 An alligator stuffed, and other skins  
 Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves  
 A beggarly account of empty boxes,  
 Green earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds,  
 Remnants of packthread and old cakes of roses,  
 Were thinly scattered, to make up a show.  
 As I remember, this should be the house –  
 What, ho! Apothecary!

35

40

45

[*APOTHECARY enters*]

APOTHECARY

Who calls so loud?

ROMEO

Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor:  
 Hold, there is forty ducats: let me have  
 A dram of poison, such soon-speeding gear  
 As will disperse itself through all the veins  
 That the life-weary taker may fall dead.

50

APOTHECARY

Such drugs I have, I must of force confess,  
 But yet the law is death to those that sell them.

ROMEO

Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,  
 And fear'st to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,  
 Need and oppression starveth in thine eyes,  
 Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back;  
 The world is not thy friend nor the world's law;  
 The world affords no law to make thee rich;  
 Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

55

60

APOTHECARY

My poverty, but not my will, consents.

ROMEO

I pay thy poverty, and not thy will.

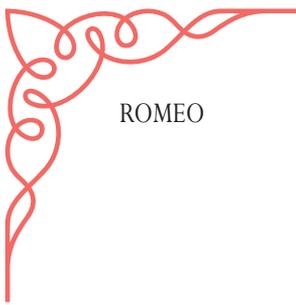
APOTHECARY

Put this in any liquid thing you will,  
 And drink it off; and, if you had the strength  
 Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

65



**36–37 Overwhelming brows, / Culling of simples:** His eyebrows screwed up from worry, sorting out his herbs or medicines.



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.  
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  
To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

70



71

**Buy food, and get thyself in flesh:** Buy some food to fatten yourself up.



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 (the audience) 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 can death be sweet for him?



EXTEND

- 1 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?
- 2 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?



DISCUSS

How successful do you think Shakespeare is 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.



# H

*I do remember an apothecary ...*

## The apothecary

In this scene Romeo visits the 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 most likely be treated with a herbal medicine bought from an apothecary.

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.

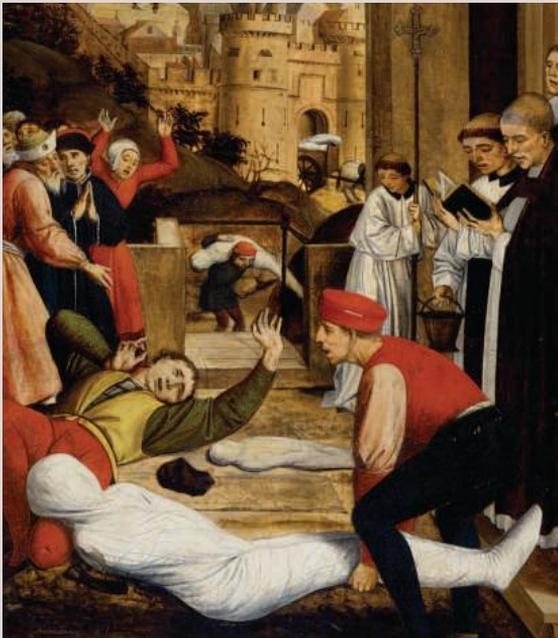
The mixtures an apothecary might sell would not only include herb and plant matter but also stranger substances like bat dung, spiders' webs and the dried windpipes of cockerels. Romeo's description of the apothecary's shop includes an alligator skin and a hanging tortoise shell. This is consistent with what we know about apothecaries' shops. As he made his own cures, it is likely that he would have a good knowledge of plants and therefore be the right person from whom to buy an illegal poison.



# H

*So fearful were they of infection ...*

## The plague



*Detail from a fifteenth-century painting of plague victims*

In 1347 the plague (known as the Black Death) arrived in Europe. By the end of the century, successive outbreaks of the epidemic had wiped out almost one half of the population.

There were two types of plague: the 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 it was highly contagious.

 The disease spread particularly rapidly through towns and cities like 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. 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 as a result of it. The plague struck in 1593, 1603 and 1608 while Shakespeare was living in London and the theatres were closed as a result.

In the scene that follows, a priest (Friar John) has been unable to deliver Friar Laurence's letter to Romeo or persuade anyone else to deliver it 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 was unable to deliver any message to Romeo, as the plague prevented him from travelling. A worried Friar Laurence decides to write again to Romeo, and 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!



**Infection:** Being contaminated by the plague  
**Nice:** Trivial or unimportant  
**Dear import:** Great importance

## Friar Laurence's cell.

*[FRIAR LAURENCE and FRIAR JOHN enter, already midway through their conversation]*

FR. LAURENCE Who bore my letter, then, to Romeo?

FRIAR JOHN I could not send it – here it is again –  
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,  
So fearful were they of infection.

FR. 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:  
Get me an iron crow, and bring it straight  
Unto my cell.

5

FRIAR JOHN Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

10

*[FRIAR JOHN exits]*

FR. LAURENCE Now must I to the monument alone.  
Within three hours will fair Juliet wake:  
She will beshrew me much that Romeo  
Hath had no notice of these accidents,  
But I will write again to Mantua  
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come.  
Poor living corpse, closed in a dead man's tomb!

15

*[FRIAR LAURENCE leaves]*



9 **Get me an iron crow:** Get me a crowbar (to break into the tomb where Juliet is).

13 **Beshrew me:** Curse me or tell me off.



QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the message that Friar Laurence was unable to have delivered 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.

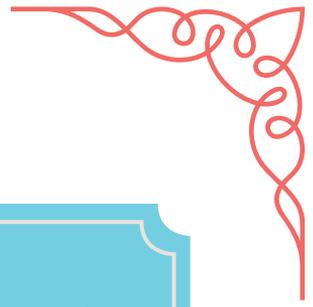
There are other forms of imagery (e.g. personification; symbolism; imagery associated with colour, sound, touch, taste and smell) but we will focus on metaphors for now. Shakespeare uses metaphors a great deal in *Romeo and Juliet*. Do you remember that when Romeo first meets Juliet in Act 1 Scene 5, he compares her with a 'torch' that lights up a room? In Act 2 Scene 2 he takes this metaphor one step further and says that the light that breaks 'through yonder window' is in fact Juliet, that she 'is the sun'. 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* is when he compares base emotions with poison. In this sense, hatred and bitterness have now infected the characters like poison might spread throughout someone's body or in the same way that a disease might spread throughout a city. Therefore, the poison in *Romeo and Juliet* is no longer merely a metaphor – it is real or **literal**.

Shakespeare cleverly **parallels** two ideas here, or 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.

NOTE: In *Hamlet*, another of Shakespeare's plays, because the king (Claudius) is corrupt, the whole of Denmark is morally contaminated and one of the characters, Marcellus, rightly observes, 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark'.

# Act 5 Scene 3 (Part 1)



## CHARACTERS

Romeo  
Friar Laurence  
Juliet  
Paris  
Balthasar  
Page  
1<sup>ST</sup> Watchman  
[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]



## IN A NUTSHELL

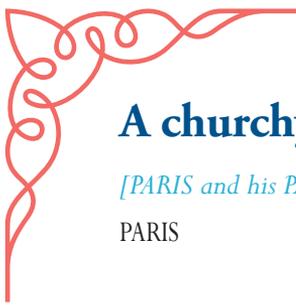
*Paris goes to lay flowers at Juliet's monument and overhears Romeo arriving. He attempts to arrest Romeo, the two of them fight and Paris is killed. Romeo finds Juliet, says his farewell to her and kills himself by drinking poison. Friar Laurence arrives as Juliet wakes but cannot persuade her to leave. The Friar runs off and Juliet, overcome by the grief of finding Romeo dead beside her, kills herself.*

## Before you read

- It might be useful as a class to look closely at Romeo's final soliloquy (lines 59–86), beginning: 'How oft when men are at the point of death'.
- At first, Romeo reflects on how death has not yet had any effect on Juliet's beauty, and he concludes that death is keeping her preserved as his lover. 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 on the rocks.
- Consider carefully how Romeo should deliver his lines: he is overcome by grief and believes there is nothing worth living for and so commits suicide.
- Consider also how Juliet should convey her dismay when she wakes to find Romeo dead. Yes, she kills herself, but look closely at what she says – is she as hysterical as she was in Act 4 Scene 3?
- In this final scene, keep in mind that Friar Laurence's deceptive plan has gone totally wrong and there is a great deal of confusion, chaos and panic.



<b>Unhallowed:</b>	Unblessed
<b>Conjurations:</b>	Spells
<b>Sepulchre:</b>	Tomb



# A churchyard, in it a tomb belonging to the Capulets.

*[PARIS and his PAGE enter, carrying flowers and a torch]*

PARIS            Give me thy torch, boy: hence, and stand aloof;  
                      Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.  
                      Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee; go.

*[PAGE leaves]*

Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew –  
O woe! Thy canopy is dust and stones –  
Which with sweet water nightly I will dew,  
Or, wanting that, with tears distilled by moans.

5

*[PAGE whistles off-stage]*

The boy gives warning something doth approach –  
What, with a torch! Muffle me, night, awhile.

*[PARIS exits, just as ROMEO and BALTHASAR enter, with a torch and tools]*

ROMEO            Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.  
                      Hold, take this letter; early in the morning  
                      See thou deliver it to my lord and father.  
                      Give me the light. Upon thy life, I charge thee,  
                      Whate'er thou hear'st or seest, stand all aloof,  
                      And do not interrupt me in my course.  
                      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  
                      And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs:  
                      The time and my intents are savage-wild.

10

15

20

BALTHASAR    I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.  
ROMEO            So shalt thou show me friendship. Take thou that:  
                      Live, and be prosperous: and farewell, good fellow.  
BALTHASAR    *[Aside]* For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout:  
                      His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.

25

*[BALTHASAR exits]*

- 
- 
- 1     **Aloof:** Apart.  
7     **Wanting that:** Lacking that.  
16    **Pry:** Look into or interfere with.  
20    **Intents:** Intentions or plans.  
23    **Live, and be prosperous:** A blessing, hoping he has a rich or successful life.



ROMEO           Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
                   Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
                   Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
                   And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!

*[ROMEO forces open the tomb]*

PARIS            This is that banished haughty Montague, 30  
                   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 comes forward]*

                  Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague! 35  
                   Can vengeance be pursued further than death?  
                   Condemnèd villain, I do apprehend thee:  
                   Obey and go with me, for thou must die.

ROMEO           I must indeed and therefore came I hither. 40  
                   Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man;  
                   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, 45  
                   A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

PARIS            I do defy thy conjurations,  
                   And apprehend thee for a felon here.

ROMEO           Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

*[ROMEO and PARIS fight]*

PAGE            O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch. 50

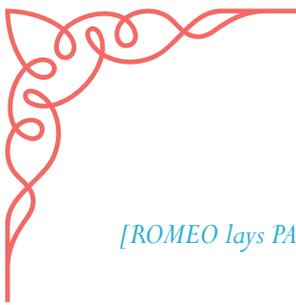
*[PAGE runs off]*

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. 55  
                   Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!  
                   I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave;



- 26   **Thou detestable maw:** You horrible throat (Romeo intensely hates the tomb, which he compares with a throat that has greedily swallowed his beloved Juliet).
- 34   **Apprehend:** Arrest.
- 50   **The watch:** The watchmen or guards.
- 53   **Peruse:** Look over or examine.



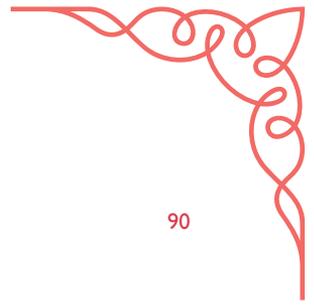
A grave? O no! A lantern, slaughtered youth,  
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes  
This vault a feasting presence full of light.

[ROMEO lays PARIS in the tomb]

How oft when men are at the point of death  
Have they been merry! Which their keepers call 60  
A lightning before death: O, how may I  
Call this a lightning? O my love! My wife!  
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:  
Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet 65  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.  
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe  
That unsubstantial death is amorous,  
And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps 70  
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;  
And never from this palace of dim night  
Depart again. Here, here will I remain  
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here 75  
Will I set up my everlasting rest,  
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars  
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!  
Arms, take your last embrace! And, lips, O you  
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss 80  
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!  
Come, bitter conduct; come, unsavoury guide!  
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!  
Here's to my love! [ROMEO drinks the poison] O true apothecary! 85  
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

[ROMEO dies; at the other end of the churchyard, FRIAR LAURENCE enters, carrying a lantern and tools]

- 
- 
- 65 **Ensign:** Flag or banner.  
66 **Crimson:** Deep purplish-red colour.  
69 **Amorous:** Loving or romantic.  
71 **Paramour:** Lover.  
77–78 **Shake the yoke of inauspicious stars / From this world-wearied flesh:** Throw off the burden of unkind fate from my body that is sick of this life.  
84 **Bark:** A small ship.



FR. 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.  
FR. LAURENCE Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend, 90  
What torch is yond, that vainly lends his light  
To grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,  
It burneth in the Capel's monument.  
BALTHASAR It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,  
One that you love. 95  
FR. LAURENCE Who is it?  
BALTHASAR Romeo.  
FR. LAURENCE How long hath he been there?  
BALTHASAR Full half an hour.  
FR. 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. 100  
FR. LAURENCE Stay, then; I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me:  
O, much I fear some ill unlucky thing.  
Romeo!

*[FRIAR LAURENCE moves forward]*

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains  
The stony entrance of this sepulchre? 105

*[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.

*[JULIET awakens]*

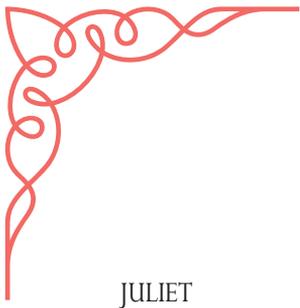
JULIET O comfortable Friar! Where is my lord? 110  
I do remember well where I should be,  
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

*[A noise is heard within]*

FR. LAURENCE I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest  
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep:  
A greater power than we can contradict 115  
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.



116 **Thwarted our intents:** Stopped or ruined our plans.



Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;  
 And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee  
 Among a sisterhood of holy nuns:  
 Stay not to question, for the watch is coming; 120  
 Come, go, good Juliet; I dare no longer stay.  
 Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.

JULIET

*[FRIAR LAURENCE runs off]*

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 125  
 To help me after? I will kiss thy lips;  
 Haply some poison yet doth hang on them.

*[JULIET kisses ROMEO]* Thy lips are warm.

1<sup>ST</sup> WATCHMAN *[Within]* Lead, boy: which way?

JULIET Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger! 130

*[JULIET snatches ROMEO's dagger]*

This is thy sheath; *[JULIET stabs herself]* there rust, and let me die.

*[JULIET falls on ROMEO's body and dies]*



**125 Churl:** Someone who lacks manners or is inconsiderate.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Does Romeo wish to fight Paris? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- 2 The word 'O' is repeated numerous times throughout Romeo's speech. Why do you think Shakespeare does this?
- 3 Cross out the words you think do not apply and complete the following statements to make some judgments.
  - 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 alternative ending would be [more / less] effective than Shakespeare's because ...

4 Create a table similar to this one for your notes:

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 being 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 at the following points in this scene:
  - a When the Friar and Balthasar are speaking straight after Romeo's death?
  - b When the Friar 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

Do you think the Friar should have run off and left Juliet? Does this seem consistent with his character earlier in the play?

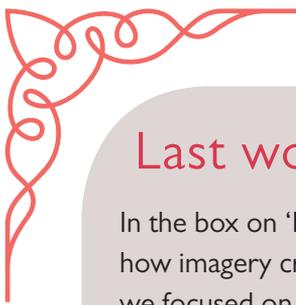


PRESS PLAY

Zeffirelli and Luhrmann take quite different approaches to this final scene, especially 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.

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).

- 1 Do you think Luhrmann's taking the liberty to change the text in this way is effective?
- 2 Does he add to the sense of tragedy at the end of the film?
- 3 How would you direct the end of the film?
- 4 What would you do to add to the sense of dramatic tension and tragedy?



## Last word about imagery

In the box on 'Imagery and metaphor' following Act 5 Scene 2 (page 127), 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 were 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 quote in your own words.

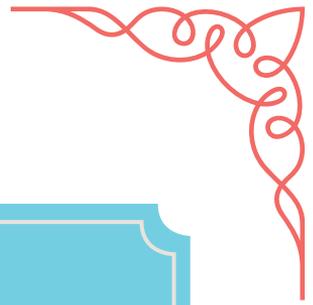
- Q Act 1 Scene 5 (line 9) – what does Juliet mean to Romeo?
- Q Act 2 Scene 2 (lines 2–3) – what does Juliet mean to Romeo?
- Q Act 5 Scene 3 (lines 57–58) – what does Juliet mean to Romeo?
- Q Act 5 Scene 3 (line 73) – in Romeo's eyes, how does Juliet contrast to the tomb's darkness?

### Imagery of a sailing ship

This is the second time that Shakespeare has Romeo using imagery comparing his life to a journey on a sailing ship. Read Act 1 Scene 4 (lines 71–72) and Act 5 Scene 3 (lines 83–84).

- Q What does Romeo seem to be suggesting about the events of his life? Does he believe he has any choice or does he feel that things are beyond his control?
- Q Do you think Romeo has no choice, that Romeo **must** die? Explain.

# Act 5 Scene 3 (Part 2)



CHARACTERS	IN A NUTSHELL
Friar Laurence Prince Balthasar Montague Capulet Lady Capulet 1 <sup>ST</sup> , 2 <sup>ND</sup> and 3 <sup>RD</sup> Watchmen Page <i>[Optional: Narrator to read stage directions]</i>	<i>The Prince, Montague, as well as 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.</i>

## 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. Everyone realises the error of their ways and the two families make their peace with each other.

<b>V</b>	<b>Perforce:</b> By force
	<b>Dire:</b> Disastrous
	<b>Privy:</b> A witness to something
	<b>Aught:</b> Anything
	<b>Discords:</b> Disagreements or conflicts

## A churchyard, in it a tomb belonging to the Capulets.

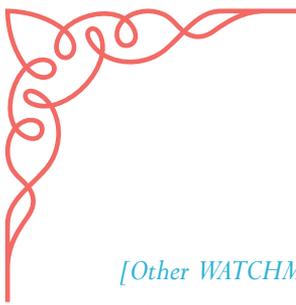
*[WATCHMEN and the PAGE of PARIS enter the tomb]*

PAGE This is the place, there, where the torch doth burn.  
1<sup>ST</sup> WATCHMAN The ground is bloody; search about the churchyard:  
Go, some of you, whoe'er you find attach.  
Pitiful sight! Here lies the county slain,

135



134 **Attach:** Arrest anyone you find.



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.

*[Other WATCHMEN enter with BALTHASAR]*

2<sup>ND</sup> WATCHMAN Here's Romeo's man; we found him in the churchyard. 140

1<sup>ST</sup> WATCHMAN Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

*[3<sup>RD</sup> WATCHMAN returns with FRIAR LAURENCE]*

3<sup>RD</sup> 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.

1<sup>ST</sup> WATCHMAN A great suspicion; stay the friar too. 145

*[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 do shriek abroad?

L. CAPULET The people in the street cry Romeo,  
Some Juliet, and some Paris; and all run  
With open outcry toward our monument. 150

PRINCE What fear is this, which startles in our ears?

1<sup>ST</sup> WATCHMAN Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain  
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,  
Warm and new killed. 155

PRINCE Search, seek and know how this foul murder comes.

1<sup>ST</sup> WATCHMAN Here is a friar, and slaughtered-Romeo's man,  
With instruments upon them, fit to open  
These dead men's tombs.

CAPULET O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds! 160

L. 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.

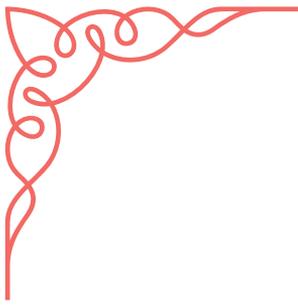
MONTAGUE Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight:  
Grief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath.  
What further woe conspires against mine age? 165



162 **Sepulchre:** Tomb or grave.

165 **My liege:** My lord (title of respect).





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  
 Her Nurse is privy: and, if aught in this 210  
 Miscarried by my fault, let my old life  
 Be sacrificed, some hour before his time,  
 Unto the rigour of severest law.

PRINCE                    We still have known thee for a holy man.  
 Where's Romeo's man? What can he say in this? 215

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.

PRINCE                    Give me the letter; I will look on it. 220  
 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 225  
 Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.  
 Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!  
 See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,  
 That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.  
 And I for winking at your discords too  
 Have lost a brace of kinsmen: all are punished. 230

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, 235  
 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!



- 
- 213 **The rigour of severest law:** The harshest punishment possible under the law (such as the death penalty).
  - 214 **Still:** Always.
  - 229 **Winking at your discords:** Overlooking or turning a blind eye to your fighting and conflicts.
  - 230 **A brace of kinsmen:** A pair of family members (i.e. Paris and Mercutio).
  - 232 **Jointure:** Dowry (money or inheritance saved up for marriage).
  - 239 **Poor sacrifices of our enmity:** They died to pay the penalty for our hatred towards each other.

PRINCE

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;  
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head.  
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished:  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

240

245



243

**Pardoned:** Forgiven or let off.



QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do you think Shakespeare sees it as necessary that the Friar retells the whole story in this scene? How might a film director be able to avoid this repetition?
- 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 'spoiled' the ending of Romeo and Juliet by telling us what is going to happen?
- 5 Do you think it was effective that Shakespeare ended 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 and their fatal flaws' on page 62. Create a flow chart to show the examples in the play of characters' base emotions, deception, misunderstandings and tragic results.



DISCUSS

How believable do you think is the reconciliation between the Capulet and Montague families?



# General activities

## Oral presentations / performance

The following scenes are particularly appropriate for performance.

- Act 1 Scene 1 (The opening brawl)
- Act 1 Scene 4 (Mercutio's Queen Mab speech)
- 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 waking in the morning)
- Act 5 Scene 3 (The deaths of Romeo and Juliet)

- 1 In groups, practise and perform one of these scenes, making sure you consider voice, costume, sound and staging.
- 2 Make your own CD 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 say why it is appropriate for that particular scene. You must include the scenes listed above.
- 3 You may choose to perform this as an oral presentation, playing short excerpts from each song, explaining your choices and how the music would be used. Would it introduce the scene, conclude it or play throughout?
- 4 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 and explain what sort of atmosphere you would look to create through the set.
- 5 Record a scene from the play as part of a radio play.
- 6 Perform a scene from the play as a group or perform one of the monologues on your own.
- 7 Produce a one-minute trailer advertising your version of the film. This can take the form of either a television advertisement or a film advertisement. Make sure you consider music, sound effects and voiceover.
- 8 Set up a chat-show style interview with one of the characters from the play where you discuss what happened to this particular character and how they felt about it. Make sure you stay in character for the entire length of the interview.



Choose from:

- Romeo
  - Juliet
  - Mercutio
  - Tybalt
  - Friar Laurence
  - Nurse
  - Lord Capulet.
- 9 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 it attention-grabbing and include some interviews.
  - 10 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.
  - 11 Present a talk to your classmates entitled: 'What's so great about Shakespeare?'

## Questions for debate

Debate one of the following questions. The Affirmative Team will agree with the statement and the Negative Team will disagree. Both teams should consist of three members who each speak for two to three 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.

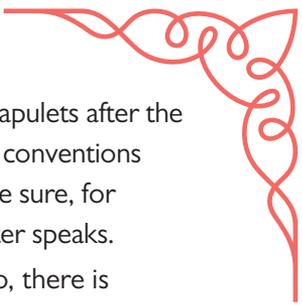
- 
- 2 Try writing part of one of the scenes as a chapter from a modern novel. This will mean that you will have to fill in some of the details of setting, incorporate dialogue into the flow of your writing, and give some idea of what characters are thinking, even in places where they do not use a soliloquy. Make sure you use modern language.
  - 3 Write a short newspaper article entitled 'Where are they now?' 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 I Scene 1)
  - the Capulet party (Act I 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)
  - Romeo and Juliet's deaths (Act 5 Scene 3).

Make sure your headline and your opening sentence grab the reader's attention. Also include some quotes from the actual play or 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 log.
- 7 Think of three alternate 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 at the end of the play. Write your own version of this letter in modern English (minimum of 250 words).

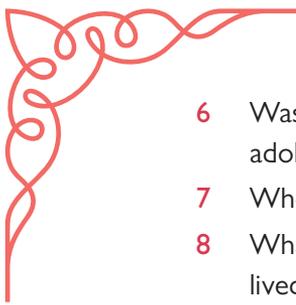
- 
- 9 Script a conversation that occurs between the Nurse and the Capulets after the play in which she explains her part in the tragedy. Use the same conventions you have observed Shakespeare using throughout the play. Make sure, for example, that you begin a new line each time a different character speaks.
  - 10 Although Shakespeare writes a final dying soliloquy for Romeo, there is no such speech for Juliet. Try writing your own soliloquy for her, using Shakespearean language (10–20 lines). Before you begin, read through Romeo’s dying soliloquy several times.

## Illustration

- 1 Draw a labelled scientific diagram of Queen Mab and her carriage. Consult Mercutio’s speech in Act I 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 for your film.
- 3 Present one of the scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* as a comic book or comic strip.
- 4 Using ICT, create a MySpace or Facebook page for one of the characters of the play. Examples include 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.

## Questions for group or class 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

You might like to brainstorm some ideas in groups before you begin writing on these topics. Make sure your essay includes the following:

- an introduction that outlines your argument
- a main body that includes at least three paragraphs. Each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence and include plenty of evidence from the text
- a conclusion that sums up your argument without introducing new information.

Here are possible essay questions based on the content covered in this book.

- 1 *Romeo and Juliet* is only about love. Discuss.
- 2 To what extent is *Romeo and Juliet* a celebration of love?
- 3 How does Shakespeare capture the interest of the audience in the opening act of *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 4 Who or what is to blame for the tragic outcome of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 5 To what extent are the personal weaknesses of the central characters responsible for the tragic outcome of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 6 Hiding the truth has both positive and negative consequences. How is this idea explored in *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 7 How important are the roles of the minor characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 8 How successfully does love overcome all obstacles in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?
- 9 Above all, it is Shakespeare's language that successfully engages the reader and communicates ideas. Discuss.
- 10 Present a case against the view that Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has no relevance to the twenty-first century.

# 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 introduce different parts of the text and help you and your students.

### 1. Understanding the narrative

Before you begin reading the text, it is important that your students have a sound grasp of the story. After the initial ‘tease’ of the Prologue, it is a good idea for the class to read through the **Act summaries** on pages 18–19, and complete the questions and activities on pages 19–20.

At the beginning of each scene, we have given a brief general 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 perform some (we have suggested which scenes are particularly appropriate for performance in **General activities**, page 140).

At the beginning of each scene, we have listed the characters in order of importance. It is advisable that you take a major role and delegate the other major parts to your most confident readers. It is also helpful if one student reads the stage directions in some of the scenes, 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 part. Encourage students to read loudly and clearly, and be sure to be forthcoming with your praise.



**Shakespeare's language** (see pages 8–12) provides some basic reading tips and explanations of key language features. We recommend that you look at the reading tips with your class before you begin reading through the play. It is important that you don't overwhelm your students with too many concepts in a short space 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 setting. 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 either read these as a class or ask students to read them in their own time.

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 (pages 13–14) lists 14 key words that recur regularly throughout the play. Students should try to learn the meanings and pronunciation of these words.



We have also included some shorter vocabulary lists at the beginning of each scene, indicated by this icon. All of these words, plus some others from the **Text notes**, are repeated in the **Vocabulary list** on pages 151–53. 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** beneath the play text on each page.



Finally, a number of **History boxes** provide useful historical information on Elizabethan England. Some of this information has been included to provide an historical context for specific scenes. Other information has been provided to fire the students' curiosity.

We have included a **Shakespeare reading list** on page 150 in case you wish to read more about Shakespeare and the Elizabethan world.

## 4. Analysing the text



In ordering the **Questions**, we have looked to balance chronology against degree of difficulty. For some scenes you may 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 challenge or **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 still 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 with the **Discuss** icon.

**Shakespeare's techniques** highlight language techniques used by Shakespeare throughout this play. We would recommend that students first read these boxes by themselves and that teachers then explain the concept using the examples.

## 5. The films (Press play)



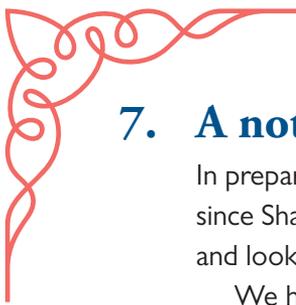
It is useful to show excerpts from both the Zeffirelli (1968) and Luhrmann (1996) films to reinforce students' understanding of key scenes and these can provide an alternative to reading some scenes if you are running short of time. The **Press play** activities provide opportunities for further analysis and discussion. We would recommend watching the Luhrmann film in its entirety after you have read through the text.

## 6. A shorter program

Some scenes are obviously more important than others and, if you're pushed for time, we would recommend that you omit some or all of the questions for the following scenes:

- Act 1 Scene 4
- Act 2 Scene 4
- Act 2 Scene 5
- Act 2 Scene 6
- Act 3 Scene 2
- Act 3 Scene 3
- Act 3 Scene 4
- Act 4 Scene 2
- Act 4 Scene 4
- Act 5 Scene 2

Even if you omit the questions from these scenes, it is still important that students are familiar with the plot, characters and ideas developed in the text.



## 7. A note about the text

In preparing this book we have taken the approach of virtually every director since Shakespeare's time: we have considered our audience (Years 9–11 students), and looked to provide an abridged version of the original text.

We have primarily used the First Folio version of *Romeo and Juliet* but have also used the Quarto versions in a few places where they offer a more accessible version of the text. We have modernised some of the stage directions (many of which were added after Shakespeare's death) and much of the spelling. We have generally followed modern norms of punctuation, with the exception of the dash (–), which we have used to indicate an interruption in the flow or the direction of the conversation.

By omitting certain passages, we have made the play more manageable and reduced the number of archaic words and obscure classical references. Some of the passages we have cut are certainly not among Shakespeare's best writing; the omission of other passages, such as the Nurse's digression in Act I Scene 3, is more regrettable but was still necessary for our purposes. Throughout the process, we have taken great care to retain the play's most beautiful passages and most famous lines. We have also been very careful not to disrupt the flow of the iambic pentameter and have, for this reason, generally omitted whole lines instead of phrases or words.

## 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 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.

## APPENDIX 2

# Shakespeare on love



Was Shakespeare's view of love more like Romeo's view or Mercutio's view?

Shakespeare has always been considered a great love poet. When theatres were closed in the 1590s because of the plague, he spent his time writing the narrative love poem *Venus and Adonis* which soon became a bestseller. He also wrote many sonnets during this period.

In Shakespeare's poetry we gain more of an insight into his views or feelings about love. In the sonnets, Shakespeare often uses the sort of romantic language we hear from Romeo but, like Mercutio, he can also be very sceptical and cynical about love. For example, in Sonnet 137 (he published 154 in all), he describes love as a 'blind fool' and in Sonnet 130 (below) he says many things we could imagine a character like Mercutio saying.

### 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 hair 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 heav'n, I think my love as rare  
As any she belied with false compare.

(dun: dull or dingy brown)

(damasked: coloured)



## APPENDIX 3

# A Shakespeare reading list

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- Wells, Stanley, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.
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# Vocabulary list

**Abroad:** Around the place

**Absolved:** Forgiven

**Adieu:** Affectionate French word for  
goodbye

**Alack:** An expression of regret, like  
'Oh, dear'

**Alderman:** Local council man

**Aloof:** Apart

**Ambiguities:** Unclear or confusing  
matters; events or words that invite  
more than one interpretation

**Amorous:** Loving or romantic

**Anatomy:** Body

**Anon:** Soon

**Apothecary:** Chemist or pharmacist

**Apprehend:** Arrest

**Athwart:** Across

**Attires:** Clothes

**Aught:** Anything

**Augmenting:** Adding to

**Ay me:** An exclamation of weariness or  
anguish, like a sigh

**Bawd:** Prostitute

**Becomèd:** Suitable or appropriate

**Bedaubed:** Covered or plastered

**Begot:** Born or created

**Behests:** Requests or commands

**Benedicite:** A greeting and a blessing  
(pronounced in five syllables:  
*ben-e-dik-i-tay*)

**Beshrew:** Curse

**Betrothed:** Promised to in marriage

**Calamity:** Disaster or misfortune

**Canker:** A cancer or infection

**Challenge:** In this case, an 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

**Churl:** Someone inconsiderate or lacking  
manners

**Civil:** Public

**Cleft:** A substantial gap or crack

**Conduit:** A fountain

**Conjurations:** Spells

**Courtier:** Someone who serves in a  
royal court

**Crimson:** Deep purplish-red colour

**Dire:** Disastrous

**Discords:** Disagreements or conflicts

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

**Disparagement:** Disgrace or lowering  
of respect by associating with  
someone of lower value

**Disposition:** Nature, temperament or  
feeling

**Do off:** Put aside or take off (opposite of  
don, to put on)

**Doomsday:** The end of the world

**Doting:** Childish or silly infatuation;  
puppy love

**Effeminate:** Not masculine; being  
emotional or acting out of love

**Eloquence:** Words of beauty and skill

**Enamoured:** Delighted by

**Enmity:** Hatred or a state of being  
enemies

**Ensign:** Flag or banner

**Entreat:** Beg somebody for something

**Exile:** Being banished (thrown or locked  
out) from a place; Romeo is not  
allowed in Verona

**Fain:** Gladly

**Fi:** An expression of annoyance,  
disapproval or even disgust

**Flattering:** Pleasing

**Forfeit:** Loss



**Forsooth:** It is true, truly

**Fray:** Fight

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

**Garish:** Annoyingly bright

**Grace:** Goodness

**Healths:** Drinks or toasts to one's health

**Hence:** Therefore

**Humour:** Mood or behaviour

**Idolatry:** Worship (of something other than God)

**Infection:** Being contaminated by the plague

**Intents:** Intentions or plans

**Inundation:** Flood or overflowing

**Jaunt:** A short trip

**Jocund:** Light-hearted or joyful

**Jointure:** Marriage dowry or payment

**Knave:** Troublemaker

**Lamentable:** Extremely sad, worth crying over

**Learnèd:** Knowledgeable

**List:** Like, wish

**Lusty:** Full of sexual energy; or strong and vigorous, which could be a contrast to the 'death' Romeo is worried about

**Maidenhead:** A woman's virginity

**Marred:** Ruined or made bad

**Marry:** An expression of surprise or frustration, referring in medieval and Elizabethan times to the Virgin Mary

**Martyred:** Being a martyr, perhaps feeling like she is a victim who has been burnt at the stake (a melodramatic reaction)

**Mewed:** Locked up or confined

**Moderately:** With restraint or not in an extreme manner

**Mutiny:** Violence

**Nought:** Nothing

**Orisons:** Prayers

**Paramour:** Lover

**Pardoned:** Forgiven or let off

**Peevish:** Spiteful and irritable

**Perchance:** Maybe

**Perforce:** By force

**Peruse:** Look over or examine

**Philosophy:** Practical wisdom or advice

**Physic:** Medicine or remedy

**Piteous:** Perhaps tender or more likely something that produces pity or sadness

**Portentous:** Serious, a sign that something bad is going to happen

**Poultice:** Medicine or ointment applied with a cloth

**Predominant:** Most common

**Presage:** Give a sign or warning of something

**Privy:** Witness to something

**Procure:** Get or obtain something

**Prodigious:** Sometimes means amazing, but it could also mean monstrous or appalling

**Prostrate:** At the feet of someone, showing respect and obedience

**Pry:** Look into or interfere

**Purgatory:** A place where people are believed to suffer after death (a waiting place in between heaven and hell)

**Quarrel:** A fight

**Rancour:** Hatred and bitterness

**Rest you merry:** A way of saying goodbye, similar to 'God bless'

**Salutation:** Greetings

**Sepulchre:** Tomb

**Shrift:** Confession

**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

**Star-crossed:** Unfortunate or ill-fated

**State:** Anxious or nervous condition, 'in a state'

**Stifled:** Suffocated

**Suit:** Offer of marriage

**Surcease:** Stop

**Swounded:** Swooned or fainted

**Tassel:** Tercel or falcon

**Tardy:** Late

**Tush:** Usually a soft rebuke, something like 'don't be ridiculous'

**Tyrant:** A cruel leader; here, the cruel part is all that's important

**Unhallowed:** Evil

**Utterance:** Speech

**Valiant:** Noble or heroic

**Valour:** Bravery

**Villain:** A wicked person, rascal or rogue: used as a harsh insult

**Visor:** Mask

**Wench:** A girl or a woman; in this case, it more than likely means mistress or prostitute

**Wit:** Sense or intelligence; when Romeo says, 'But 'tis no wit to go,' he means that it's not wise to go to the party

**Woo:** Try to win the heart of someone or win them over

**'Zounds:** Short for 'By His [Christ's] wounds' (a mild swear word or blasphemy in Elizabethan times)

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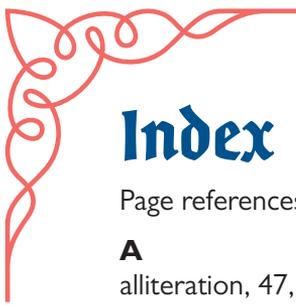
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