

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

Drama by William Shakespeare



Video link at
thinkcentral.com

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML9-1034

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

COMMON CORE

RL 2 Determine a theme of a text. **RL 3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL 9 Analyze how an author draws on source material in a specific work. **RL 10** Read and comprehend dramas. **L 3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

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

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



● TEXT ANALYSIS: SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

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

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

● READING STRATEGY: READING SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

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

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
street brawl					

After you complete your chart, use its information to help you determine the play's **theme**, or central message about life or human nature.

Act One

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

Act Two

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

Act Three

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

Act Four

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

Act Five

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

THE TRAGEDY OF *Romeo & Juliet*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

COMMON CORE SL 2

GO BEHIND THE CURTAIN

One Play, Many Productions

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

TIME

The 14th century

CAST

THE MONTAGUES

Lord Montague (mŏn'tə-gyŏŏ')

Lady Montague

Romeo, son of Montague

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

Balthasar (bäl'thə-sär'), servant to Romeo

Abram, servant to Montague

THE CAPULETS

Lord Capulet (kăp'yŏŏ-lĕt')

Lady Capulet

Juliet, daughter of Capulet

Tybalt (tĭb'əlt), nephew of Lady Capulet

Nurse to Juliet

Peter, servant to Juliet's nurse

Sampson, servant to Capulet

Gregory, servant to Capulet

An Old Man of the Capulet family

PLACE

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

OTHERS

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

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

Friar Laurence, a Franciscan priest

Friar John, another Franciscan priest

Count Paris, a young nobleman, kinsman of the prince

Apothecary (ə-pŏth'ĭ-kĕr'ĕ)

Page to Paris

Chief Watchman

Three Musicians

An Officer

Chorus

Citizens of Verona, **Gentlemen** and **Gentlewomen** of both houses, **Maskers**, **Torchbearers**, **Pages**, **Guards**, **Watchmen**, **Servants**, and **Attendants**



Prologue

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

[Enter Chorus.]

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

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

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

7 misadventured: unlucky.

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

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

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

Act One

SCENE 1 *A public square in Verona.*

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

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

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

Gregory. No, for then we should be colliers.

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

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

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

Gregory. But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gregory. The heads of the maids?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

COMMON CORE L5a

A SARCASM

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

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

B ASIDE

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

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

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

60 Turn thee, Benvolio! look upon thy death.

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

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

65 Have at thee, coward!

[*They fight.*]

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

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

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

[*Enter old Capulet and Lady Capulet.*]

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

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

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

[*Enter old Montague and Lady Montague.*]

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

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

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

Prince. Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,

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

80 Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets

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

90 Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

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

59 heartless hinds: cowardly servants.

63 drawn: with your sword out.

65 Have at thee: Defend yourself.

66 bills, and partisans: spears.

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

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

77 pernicious: destructive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

99 adversary: enemy.

100 ere: before.

C CHARACTER

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

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

110 fray: fight.

113 drave: drove.

115 rooteth: grows.

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

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

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

And makes himself an artificial night.
 Black and portentous must this humor prove
 135 Unless good counsel may the cause remove.
Benvolio. My noble uncle, do you know the cause?
Montague. I neither know it nor can learn of him.
Benvolio. Have you importuned him by any means?
Montague. Both by myself and many other friends;
 140 But he, his own affections' counselor,
 Is to himself—I will not say how true—
 But to himself so secret and so close,
 So far from sounding and discovery,
 As is the bud bit with an envious worm
 145 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air
 Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.
 Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
 We would as willingly give cure as know.
 [*Enter Romeo lost in thought.*]
Benvolio. See, where he comes. So please you step aside,
 150 I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.
Montague. I would thou wert so happy by thy stay
 To hear true shrift. Come, madam, let's away.
 [*Exeunt Montague and Lady.*]
Benvolio. Good morrow, cousin.
Romeo. Is the day so young?
Benvolio. But new struck nine.
Romeo. Ay me! sad hours seem long.
 155 Was that my father that went hence so fast?
Benvolio. It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?
Romeo. Not having that which having makes them short.
Benvolio. In love?
Romeo. Out—
 160 **Benvolio.** Of love?
Romeo. Out of her favor where I am in love.
Benvolio. Alas that love, so gentle in his view,
 Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!
Romeo. Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,
 165 Should without eyes see pathways to his will!
 Where shall we dine?—O me! What fray was here?—
 Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.

134 portentous: indicating evil to come; threatening.

138 importuned: asked in an urgent way.

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

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

152 shrift: confession.

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

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

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

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

Benvolio. No, coz, I rather weep.

Romeo. Good heart, at what?

Benvolio. At thy good heart's oppression.

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

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

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

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

Romeo. What, shall I groan and tell thee?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

184 purged: cleansed (of the smoke).

185 vexed: troubled.

187 gall: something causing bitterness or hate.

188 Soft: Wait a minute.

192 sadness: seriousness.

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

Behind the Curtain

The Royal Shakespeare Company's 1992 production



The Cortesloe Theatre's 2000 production



Casting

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

A 2004 coproduction of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Second City



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

230 Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.

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

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

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

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

220–221 What is Benvolio's advice?

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

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

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

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

SCENE 2 *A street near the Capulet house.*

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

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

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

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

1 bound: obligated.

Paris. Of honorable reckoning are you both,
 5 And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.
 But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?
Capulet. But saying o'er what I have said before:
 My child is yet a stranger in the world,
 She hath not seen the change of fourteen years;
 10 Let two more summers wither in their pride
 Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.
Paris. Younger than she are happy mothers made.
Capulet. And too soon marred are those so early made.
 The earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she;
 15 She is the hopeful lady of my earth.
 But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart;
 My will to her consent is but a part.
 An she agree, within her scope of choice
 Lies my consent and fair according voice. **D**
 20 This night I hold an old accustomed feast,
 Whereto I have invited many a guest,
 Such as I love, and you among the store,
 One more, most welcome, makes my number more.
 At my poor house look to behold this night
 25 Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light.
 Such comfort as do lusty young men feel
 When well-appareled April on the heel
 Of limping Winter treads, even such delight
 Among fresh female buds shall you this night
 30 Inherit at my house. Hear all, all see,
 And like her most whose merit most shall be;
 Which, on more view of many, mine, being one,
 May stand in number, though in reck'ning none.
 Come, go with me. [*to Servant, giving him a paper*]
 Go, sirrah, trudge about
 35 Through fair Verona; find those persons out
 Whose names are written there, and to them say,
 My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.
 [*Exeunt Capulet and Paris.*]
Servant. Find them out whose names are written here! It is
 written that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard and the
 40 tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil and the painter
 with his nets; but I am sent to find those persons whose names
 are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person
 hath here writ. I must to the learned. In good time!

4 reckoning: reputation.

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

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

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

16 woo her: try to win her heart.

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

20 old accustomed feast: a traditional or annual party.

D BLANK VERSE

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

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

34 sirrah: a term used to address a servant.

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

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

[Enter Benvolio and Romeo.]

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

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

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

Benvolio. For what, I pray thee?

Romeo. For your broken shin.

Benvolio. Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

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

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

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

Romeo. Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

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

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

Servant. Ye say honestly. Rest you merry!

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

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

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

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

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

[*gives back the paper*]

A fair assembly. Whither should they come?

Servant. Up.

Romeo. Whither?

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

Romeo. Whose house?

Servant. My master's.

Romeo. Indeed I should have asked you that before.

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

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

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

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

72 whither: where.

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

81 crush a cup of wine: slang for "drink some wine."

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

85 unattainted: unbiased; unprejudiced.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCENE 3 *Capulet's house.*

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

[Enter Lady Capulet and Nurse.]

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

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

3–4 what: a call like "Hey, where are you?"

[Enter Juliet.]

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

Nurse. Your mother.

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

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

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

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

Lady Capulet. She's not fourteen.

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

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

Lady Capulet. A fortnight and odd days.

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

14 teen: sorrow.

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



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

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

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

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

33 tetchy: touchy; cranky.

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

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

39 broke her brow: cut her forehead.

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

E CHARACTER

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

55 perilous: hazardous; dangerous.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

80 **Lady Capulet.** What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast.
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
Examine every several lineament,
85 And see how one another lends content;
And what obscured in this fair volume lies
Find written in the margent of his eyes.
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him only lacks a cover.

90 The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
For fair without the fair within to hide.
That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;
So shall you share all that he doth possess,
95 By having him making yourself no less.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Enter a Servingman.]

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

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

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

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 4 *A street near the Capulet house.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

F TRAGEDY

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

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

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

1–10 What, shall this . . . be gone:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Romeo. Nay, that's not so.

Mercutio. I mean, sir, in delay

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

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

Mercutio. Why, may one ask?

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

Mercutio. And so did I.

Romeo. Well, what was yours?

Mercutio. That dreamers often lie.

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

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

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

G PUN

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

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

34 betake . . . legs: dance.

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

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

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

55 agate stone: jewel for a ring.

57 atomies: tiny creatures.

Behind the Curtain

Romeo and Juliet in the Globe Theatre's 2004 production



Costume Design

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

Romeo and Juliet in the Globe Theatre's 2000 production



Romeo and Juliet in the Royal Ballet's 2003 production



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

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

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

59 spinners' legs: spiders' legs.

61 traces: harness.

68 joiner: carpenter.

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

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

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

89 plaits: braids.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benvolio. Strike, drum.

[*Exeunt.*]

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

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

[*Servingmen come forth with napkins.*]

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

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

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

Second Servingman. Ay, boy, ready.

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

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

[*Exeunt.*]

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

COMMON CORE RL.3

H CHARACTER FOILS

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

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

2 trencher: wooden plate.

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

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

Capulet. Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes

15 Unplagued with corns will have a bout with you.

Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all

Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty,

She I'll swear hath corns. Am I come near ye now?

Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day

20 That I have worn a visor and could tell

A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,

Such as would please. 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone!

You are welcome, gentlemen! Come, musicians, play.

A hall, a hall! give room! and foot it, girls.

[*Music plays and they dance.*]

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

And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.

Ah, sirrah, this unlooked-for sport comes well.

Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet,

For you and I are past our dancing days.

30 How long is't now since last yourself and I

Were in a mask?

Second Capulet. By'r Lady, thirty years.

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

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

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

20 *visor:* mask.

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



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

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

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

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

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

Servant. I know not, sir.

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

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

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

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

Capulet. Young Romeo is it?

Tybalt. 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

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

33 nuptial: marriage.

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

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

❶ **BLANK VERSE**

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

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

64 portly: dignified.

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

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

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

Capulet. He shall be endured.

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

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

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

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

Tybalt. Patience perforce with willful choler meeting
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall,

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

[*Exit.*]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[*kisses her*]

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

72 semblance: outward appearance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

105 purged: washed away.



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

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

[kisses her]

Juliet. You kiss by the book.

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

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

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

115 Shall have the chinks.

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

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

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

115 shall have the chinks: shall become rich.

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

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

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

Capulet. Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone;

120 We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.

[*They whisper in his ear.*]

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

I thank you, honest gentlemen. Good night.

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

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

125 I'll to my rest.

[*Exeunt all but Juliet and Nurse.*]

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

Nurse. The son and heir of old Tiberio.

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

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

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

Nurse. I know not.

Juliet. Go ask his name.—If he be married,

My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

Nurse. His name is Romeo, and a Montague,

135 The only son of your great enemy.

Juliet. My only love, sprung from my only hate!

Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

Prodigious birth of love it is to me

That I must love a loathed enemy.

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

Juliet. A rhyme I learnt even now

Of one I danced withal.

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

Nurse. Anon, anon!

Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.

[*Exeunt.*]

120 **towards:** coming up.

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

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

COMMON CORE L 4a

Language Coach

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

Comprehension

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

Text Analysis

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

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

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

Text Criticism

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

COMMON CORE

RL 2 Determine a theme of a text. **RL 3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. **RL 10** Read and comprehend dramas. **L 3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.