

IGCSE Edexcel (9-1) English Literature

Romeo and Juliet: Overview of Text



Brief Overview

Act 1

Act 1 Scene 1: The action starts with a fight on the streets of Verona between the Montagues and Capulets. The fight breaks up and the Prince threatens the patriarchs of the families that if another fight like this breaks out they will pay with their "***lives***".

Act 1 Scene 2: After this, Paris, a young nobleman, asks Lord Capulet for Juliet's hand in marriage. Lord Capulet believes Juliet is too young but invites Paris to a feast that he is throwing, giving Paris an opportunity to "***woo***" Juliet.

Act 1 Scene 3: The audience is then introduced to Lady Capulet, Juliet and her Nurse. They have a conversation about marriage and Juliet reflects that it is a fate that "***I dream not of.***"

Act 1 Scene 4: The audience is then introduced to a **lovesick** Romeo who through the encouragement of Mercutio chooses to go to Capulet's feast to distract himself from how much he misses Rosaline.

Act 1 Scene 5: The two lovers meet in this scene at Capulet's feast and fall in love, but quickly find out that they belong to the opposing families.

Act 2

Act 2: Prologue

Act 2 Scene 1: Mercutio and Benvolio are looking for Romeo after the "***feast***".

Act 2 Scene 2: This is the iconic **balcony scene** where Romeo and Juliet confess their love for each other and plan to be married.

Act 2 Scene 3: Romeo meets with the Friar to ask if he will marry Romeo and Juliet. Despite the Friar's reservations he agrees to marry the couple, hopeful about the peace it could bring to the families.

Act 2 Scene 4: The Nurse meets with Romeo, Romeo tells her that Juliet should meet him in Friar Laurence's cell. They make plans to consummate the marriage.

Act 2 Scene 5: The Nurse tells Juliet about what she and Romeo had discussed.

Act 2 Scene 6: In this scene, Romeo and Juliet are secretly married by the Friar.



Act 3

Act 3 Scene 1: Tybalt challenges Romeo to a fight but Romeo refuses. Mercutio steps in and is killed by Tybalt. Romeo is then filled with a **murderous rage** and kills Tybalt. The Prince hears about this from Benvolio and then banishes Romeo.

Act 3 Scene 2: While Juliet waits at home for her new husband, the Nurse returns to tell Juliet the news about Romeo's banishment. Juliet is distraught about it.

Act 3 Scene 3: The Friar tells Romeo about his **banishment** and Romeo is troubled and threatens to kill himself. The Nurse comes with news saying Juliet is in the same state. The Friar comes through with a plan to save the couple. He sends Romeo to **Mantua**.

Act 3 Scene 4: In light of **Tybalt's death**, Capulet decides (in hopes of making Juliet feel happier) that his daughter **must** marry Paris without asking her opinion.

Act 3 Scene 5: Juliet is told about her fate to marry Paris. She **refuses** to marry him which leads to her father **threatening to disown** her. Juliet goes to the Friar to help.

Act 4

Act 4 Scene 1: Paris goes to the Friar in preparation for the wedding; Juliet is also there but tries to **ignore** Paris' advances. When Paris leaves Juliet starts to weep asking for advice from the Friar. He sets in motion a plan to rescue the lovers. He gives Juliet a **potion** that will make it look like she's dead and tells Friar John to go to Mantua to tell Romeo of the plan.

Act 4 Scene 2: Juliet comes back from the Friar's cell revealing that she will marry Paris and so the wedding is moved up.

Act 4 Scene 3: Juliet soliloquises her fears about the plan but takes the potion.

Act 4 Scene 4: The Capulets prepare for the wedding.

Act 4 Scene 5: The Nurse finds Juliet's '**dead body**' and the family begins to grieve as the wedding turns into a funeral.

Act 5

Act 5 Scene 1: Romeo hears news of Juliet's death in Mantua and, unaware of the Friar's plan, finds an apothecary who gives him a poison.



Act 5 Scene 2: Friar John tells Friar Laurence that he was unable to give Romeo the letter outlining the plan.

Act 5 Scene 3: Paris protects Juliet's tomb, Romeo enters trying to find Juliet the two fight and Paris dies. Romeo sees Juliet, drinks the poison, dies, Juliet wakes up as Friar Laurence arrives, he then goes outside as he hears voices. Juliet then takes Romeo's dagger and stabs herself. The families of the lovers enter the scene and agree to make peace.

Detailed Overview

Act 1

Summary

The play starts with a prologue where the audience is told about the tragic story of Romeo and Juliet.

The action begins with a **fight on the streets of Verona** between the Montagues and the Capulets which disturbs its inhabitants. After this, Paris and Lord Capulet meet to talk about giving Juliet to Paris for marriage. The audience then sees Lady Capulet and the Nurse **giving Juliet advice about marriage**. Then the audience watches Mercutio convinces a **lovesick Romeo** to attend a party at the Capulet's house to get his mind off unrequited love, Rosaline. This is where Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time and **instantly fall in love**.



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Act 1 Prologue

A **prologue** was a traditional practice at the beginning of a play. They summarise the events of the play and can therefore be seen as a **dramatic device used to create tension** as the audience becomes increasingly excited to understand how events play out.

The prologue tells the story of **“two star-cross’d”** lovers who are from **“two households”** who have an **“ancient grudge”**. The audience learns that the children from the families must take their lives to be together.





The structure of the prologue is a **sonnet** which is the traditional form for a romantic poem, this instantly depicts the story of Romeo and Juliet as a **love story**.

Key Quotes

- **(I.i.1) “Two households, both alike in dignity”**
 - The first line in the play shows the likeness of the families which makes their feud more ironic. To be **“both alike in dignity”** means that they had **the same social standing**. In the Elizabethan times a person's **social status** was very important it dictated the way they lived their life, the clothes they wore, the friends they had, everything.
- **(I.i.3) “From ancient grudge break to new mutiny”**
 - The audience is told that the feud is **“ancient”**. This **adjective** has connotations with something old, sacred and almost **untouched**; as though it had been like this since the beginning of time, it is a force nothing can break. It is then **juxtaposed** by the **“new mutiny”** which means that there is new violence which **foreshadows** the intensity that is brought about through the young lovers.
- **(I.i.6) “A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life”**
 - This may be one of the most **famous** lines in the play because it perfectly sums up the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. During the Elizabethan times, people were incredibly **superstitious** and believed in **fate** and that people's lives were written in the stars, to be **“star-cross'd”** meant that they were frustrated by the stars.
- **(I.i.8) “Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.”**
 - The use of bury is a **play** on words as by putting the words **“death”** and **“bury”** together **emphasises the importance** of the lovers' death. Their lover's death was not only an act to show their **eternal** love for each other but it also ended their **parents' rivalry**.

Act 1 Scene 1

Summary

The scene starts with a **fight** between the servants of the Montagues and Capulets. The argument starts with an **insult** which escalates to an all-out battle in the middle of the streets of Verona..

The Prince then does a speech where he tells off the Montagues and Capulets explaining the way their rivalry has disturbed the streets of



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Verona. He warns them that if they do not put an end to it they will **pay with their lives**.

Lady Montague then asks where Romeo is and Benvolio explains how he is **suffering from love sickness** from his **unrequited love** from Rosaline.

Key Quotes

- **(I.i.15-18) Sampson:** *“Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall. Therefore I will push Montague’s men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall”*
 - This quote illustrates the **violence, conflict and female subservience** that pervades the play. The term **“weaker vessels”** is a **Biblical allusion** as women are described like this in the Bible. The **adjective** weaker is used as women were seen as the weaker sex and **“vessel”** as they were seen as ‘vessels’ to produce children as it was their **duty and God-given purpose**.
 - The whole quote is a **sexual innuendo** when paired along with the forceful verb **“thrust”** exhibits the violence that is apart of the **culture of the men**, even when it comes to intimate things like sex.
- **(I.i.35) Sampson:** *“Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is a disgrace to them if they bear it. (bites his thumb)”*
 - Here Shakespeare introduces the idea of **male pride and honour**, he is essentially saying that if he can insult the Montagues and they do nothing to retaliate it is disgraceful to them.
 - To **“bite his thumb”** was an insult, equivalent to swearing at someone in the 21st century.
- **(I.i.60-62) Tybalt:** *“What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee; Have at thee, coward!”*
 - Tybalt is a **fiery and rash** character while Benvolio a Capulet tries to deescalate the situation before him **“I do but keep the peace”**. This **juxtaposes** with Tybalt, making his reaction all the more overwhelming.
 - Shakespeare uses the **rule of three** to emphasise Tybalt;s hatred towards the Montagues. This is also a tool by Shakespeare to illustrate to the audience the **extent of bad blood** between the Montagues and Capulets.
- **(I.i.86-87) Prince** *“If ever you disturb our streets again, Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.”*
 - The Prince is the **authority figure** in Verona, and so what he says becomes the law.
 - We are told by the Prince that the families have **“thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets”**, this shows the disruption that the feud causes in Verona. Shakespeare also uses **dramatic irony** as the Prince says **“your lives”** will pay the price, when in fact the audience knows that it is not the parents who die but actually their children.



- **(I.i.122-123) Montague:** *“With tears augmenting the fresh morning’s dew, Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs.”*
 - Romeo is suffering from unrequited love which has put him into a **state of depression**.
 - Shakespeare aligns the **metaphors** with **natural imagery** which exhibits the extent of his sadness. Montague describes him as adding to the **“dew”** with his **“tears”** and contributing to the **“clouds”** with **“sighs”** the **poetic nature** of his speech aligns Romeo’s love with **Petrearchan love**.
- **(I.i.188-189) Romeo:** *“Tut, I have lost myself. I am not here. This is not Romeo. He’s some other where.”*
 - Romeo is essentially saying here that he is not himself because of his **unrequited love**.
 - Shakespeare was writing in the **Renaissance** which was a time of higher enlightenment in many sectors but especially **philosophical thought**.
 - The Elizabethans believed that humans were made of **three parts** the **mind, body and soul** while all three are separate they are one and the same.
 - Based on this it is possible to argue that due to Romeo’s heartbreak the three parts of him have been **separated** and so he is not the normal Romeo or Romeo at all because his heart (soul) has been broken.

Act 1 Scene 2

Summary

In this scene, the audience sees **Paris**, a young man of royal descent, and **Lord Capulet** have a discussion about **Juliet’s future**. Paris asks for **Juliet’s hand in marriage** but Lord Capulet declines to say that Juliet is too young to marry and he will not force his daughter to marry against her will. He says that Paris will only have his blessing if Juliet **chooses** to marry him.

The audience finds out that Capulet is holding a **feast** at his mansion that night. Capulet sends his servant **Peter** to give the **invites** to the guests. However, he cannot read and so sees Romeo and Benvolio and asks Romeo to help read the list. Peter then informs **Romeo and Benvolio** of the feast at his master's house. As Romeo is reading the guest list he also learns that **Rosaline** will be there. While Benvolio thinks it is an opportunity to get Romeo’s **mind off Rosaline** Romeo only agrees to go so that he may get a **glimpse of Rosaline**.



<https://bazluhrmannisgod.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/scene-shot-2016-05-07-at-1-37-24-pm.png?w=652&h=408>



Key Quotes

- **(I.ii.8-9) Capulet:** *“My child is yet a stranger in the world. She hath not seen the change of fourteen years.”*
 - Lord Capulet strikes the audience here as a caring and protective father. The use of the **possessive “my”** has a **dual meaning**. Juliet is literally his child but it had another meaning in the Elizabethan times as women belonged to their father until they were wed they then became the property of their husbands.
 - Capulet uses the **metaphor** of **“stranger”** to describe his daughter which in this case he uses to mean inexperienced.

Context

In the Elizabethan times **marriage was a tool to gain a higher social position**. However, here Lord Capulet seems here not to care about advancing the family's social status. Instead his interest lies in the wellbeing and happiness of his daughter.

- **(I.ii.16-17) Capulet:** *“But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart. My will to her consent is but a part.”*
 - Capulet is essentially saying here that Paris needs to try and **court** her because as her father what he wants doesn't matter if Juliet does not agree to marry Paris out of her own will. The term **“woo”** would be the equivalent of **flirting** with someone, Capulet asks Paris to get Juliet's hand in marriage in a natural way, a **marriage of love not arrangement**.
- **(I.ii.51-52) Benvolio:** *“Take thou some new infection to thy eye, And the rank poison of the old will die.”*
 - Benvolio is saying that when Romeo meets a new lady then his old love for Rosaline will die. Benvolio calls Rosaline's hold over Romeo as an **“infection”**, this is an **extended metaphor** which demonstrates how lovesick Romeo is.
 - Shakespeare also uses foreshadowing here as he calls Juliet's love a **“poison”** - at the end **Romeo dies by taking poison**.
- **(I.ii.107-108) Romeo:** *“I'll go along, no such sight to be shown, not to see whom you show But to rejoice in splendor of mine own”*
 - Romeo is saying that he will go to the feast not to see other women but to so that he can see Rosaline. Romeo equates seeing his unrequited love to rejoicing in splendour, this suggests that Rosaline has a kind of **spell over Romeo**. Seeing her suggests a celebration which **juxtaposes** his previously described depressed state.



Act 1 Scene 3

Summary

The scene starts with Lady Capulet looking for Juliet. Here, the audience is able to see the **female family dynamic in the Capulet household**.

Lady Capulet, Juliet and the Nurse have a conversation about marriage. In this conversation, the Nurse describes her **extensive relationship** with Juliet from being her **wet nurse** as a baby. This is also a chance for the audience to learn about the nurse; Shakespeare tells us that she had a daughter called **Susan** and husband both of which are now dead. The Nurse also makes **crude sexual jokes**.



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Lady Capulet asks her daughter what she thinks of marriage because she fears that her daughter is becoming an **old maid** (this is because by Juliet's age she was **married with children**). Lady Capulet tells Juliet of **Paris' intentions**, but, while Juliet is nonchalant about the idea of marriage, **she agrees to go along with it**. The scene ends with their servant Peter telling them that guests are arriving.

Key Quotes

- **(I.iii.12) Nurse: Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour**
 - Here we can see how well the Nurse knows Juliet. This is clearly better than her mother who has to ask the Nurse how old her own daughter is.
 - The small period of time an **“hour”** mirrors the **close relationship** of Juliet and the Nurse.
- **(I.iii.57-58) Nurse: “Yea,” quoth my husband, “Fall’st upon thy face? Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age.**
 - Here the audience is introduced to the **crude and sexual language** of the Nurse. The Nurse is telling a story about a joke that her late husband made about her daughter who has passed away. The Nurse tells the story about when she was trying to **wean** her baby Susan off of breastmilk and so she put the **“wormwood”** breast to make it bitter which made Susan fall **“backwards”**

Wet nurses

The audience is informed that the Nurse was Juliet's **‘wet nurse’** a wet nurse in Elizabethan times is a woman employed by a **wealthy/noble family** to **breastfeed** the children as this was seen as below a noblewoman. It is clear that this has allowed a close relationship to form at the cost of Juliet's mother's relationship.

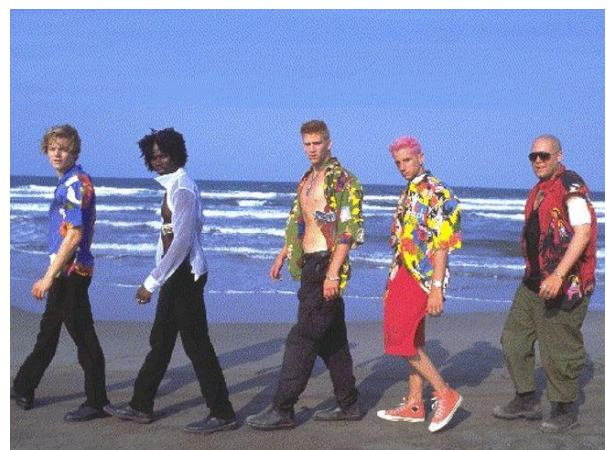


- The quote above is the nurse's husband's reply, the joke is about a woman's **subservience sexually** when she comes of age. The crude nature of the joke also typifies the **nurse as from a lower class**.
- **(I.iii.68) Juliet: *It is an honor that I dream not of.***
 - This shows that Juliet has a lot of respect for the institution of marriage but it is not something that she thinks about. Through this Juliet strikes the audience as a girl that does not have love on her mind. This is **dramatic irony** as the audience knows that by the end of the play Juliet will not just have dreamed love but will have died for it.
- **(I.iii.74-76) Lady Capulet: *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.***
 - Juliet's mother talks of what is expected of Juliet in terms of marriage because it was what was expected of her and all women. **Expectations of women** in these times were incredibly strict and so by avoiding what was expected of Juliet, the audience may have seen it as **avoiding the will of God**.
 - Lady Capulet is also very excited about Paris not just because he is "**valiant**" but also because of what his **high social standing** could do for Juliet and the family. This is one of the main reasons nobles got married from a young age, to secure more wealth; marriages were used as **business partnerships**.
- **(I.iii.99-101) Juliet: *'Il 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.***
 - Juliet is saying here that she will give Paris a chance if she sees something that she likes, however she will not fall for Paris. By saying "**no more deep**" suggests images of falling and in this case of falling in love which **juxtaposes** the idea of giving consent to "**fly**". It is possible that this could mean that despite all efforts Juliet will still fall in love.

Act 1 Scene 4

Summary

In this scene, the audience is able to observe the Montague men as they get ready for the Capulet feast. Romeo is still depressed and is worried about going, he tells his friends about a dream that he had which entails his **death** after going to the feast. In hopes of convincing Romeo that dreams don't mean anything Mercutio, in a lengthy speech, tells Romeo about a dream he had about a character called **Queen Mab** a fairy who gives people dreams of what they truly desire.



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Key Quotes

- **(I.iv.15-16) Romeo:** *“I have a soul of lead So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.”*
 - This is another description of Romeo’s depressed state due to his unrequited love. He uses an **extended metaphor** to describe why he cannot dance. Describing his soul as made of **“lead”** expresses how he is **feeling heavy**.
 - The **“lead”** **“stakes”** him to the ground which suggests that he is feeling this way **against his will**. He does not choose to feel the way he does but instead love has made him like this.
- **(I.iv.25-26) Romeo:** *“Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.”*
 - Romeo asks this question about love, it can be argued that this is **uncharacteristic** of him, as he strikes the reader as someone who loves love. This also illustrates how hurt Romeo is by Rosaline: she has **changed the character** of Romeo.
 - The use of **asyndetic listing** also creates **tension** in which the **climax is the simile** at the end.
 - The **simile** **“pricks like a thorn”** has a double meaning as while the obvious meaning is that love is painful Romeo is also saying that love is also a rose and beautiful.
 - This quote is mirrored by Juliet in **Act 2** when she says that their exchange is **“too rash, too unadvised, too sudden, Too like the lightning,”**.
- **(I.iv.27-28) Mercutio:** *“If love be rough with you, be rough with love. Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.—”*
 - Mercutio acts as a **foil** to Romeo because their views on love **juxtapose**. While Romeo is romantic and focuses on the emotional aspects of love (some would say the feminine side of love) Mercutio predominantly **focuses on the physical and sexual aspects** of love.
 - Mercutio advises Romeo to **“be rough with love”**. This is **ironic** as we are shown that Romeo has been softened by love. He even argues later that Juliet’s love has made him **“effeminate”** and **“softer”**.
 - **“Prick”** was another word for penis so Mercutio is essentially saying that he should **‘be the man’** and **take control of love instead of letting love control him**.
- **(I.iv.55-57) Mercutio:** *“She is the fairies’ midwife, and she comes In shape no bigger than an agate stone On the forefinger of an alderman...(72-74) Through lovers’ brains, and then they dream of love; On 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,”*
 - Mercutio starts to describe the character of **Queen Mab**. She’s a fairy who was created by Shakespeare. She is referenced in other works of literature.
 - She is described to be incredibly small, no bigger than **“agate stone”** which was a **semi-precious stone**.
 - Queen Mab’s purpose is to give people what they want through their dreams. Mercutio is essentially trying to prove to Romeo that dreams mean nothing. It is



possible that Shakespeare starts with lovers to draw Romeo in as it something he can relate to.

- **(I.iv.97-101) 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 And more inconstant than the wind, who woos”*

- Through Mercutio, Shakespeare tries to buttress the insignificance of dreams. He describes through a **metaphor** that they are **“children of an idle (meaning unfocused) brain”** this suggests that, like children, dreams are unformed and juvenile.
- Alternatively, like children, dreams are playful and so Shakespeare may be trying to say that dreams are not serious creations of the mind and so should not be taken as important.
- Shakespeare goes on to say that it is less substantial than the air and more unpredictable than the wind. Through this **metaphor**, Shakespeare **illustrates the insignificance of dreams**.

Dreams

During the Elizabethan era, people were extremely superstitious. Dreams were believed to have many purposes, some believed that dreams were visions from God and so Shakespeare asserting that dreams are insignificant may have been largely disrespectful and offensive.

- **(I.iv.107-112) Romeo:** *“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 despisèd life closed in my breast By some vile forfeit of untimely death.”*
 - Romeo is now telling his friends and the audience what was in his dream, he tells them that in his dream he went to the party and was met by his **“untimely death”**.
 - This is extreme **foreshadowing** by Shakespeare and also **dramatic irony**. Romeo believes that he may die soon due to meeting Juliet at the party and at the same time the audience knows that he will die.
 - It then makes it **ironic** that Mercutio approaches the situation as though it means nothing, not realising the gravity and reality of what is to come.



Act 1 Scene 5

Summary

The Capulet feast takes place in this scene and is where the two lovers meet. The scene starts with Capulet giving a **speech** to his guests.

After this Romeo sees Juliet for the first time and **falls in love with her instantly**. The tender moment is then **juxtaposed** by Tybalt's anger when he sees Romeo, a Montague, in a Capulet household. He becomes enraged and goes and tells the patriarch of the family Lord Capulet what he's seen. Lord Capulet tries to calm Tybalt down explaining that Romeo is not creating a scene and kicking him out would ruin the party and so he must stay.



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It is then that Romeo and Juliet meet and have their first conversation in which they talk in **sonnet form**, the 21st century equivalent to **flirting**. It is after this interaction, Benvolio leaves with Romeo and the two lovers find out who each other are.

Key Quotes

- **(I.v.14-17) Capulet:** *“Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes Ah, my mistresses! Which of you all Unplagued with corns will walk a bout with you.— Will now deny to dance?”*
 - Capulet takes the role of the **gracious host**, making sure that his party is exciting and all the guests have a good time. He starts off with a **joke** which exhibits him as a character who likes to **entertain and is concerned with appearances**.
 - Capulet is saying here that if a woman refuses to dance it must mean that they have corns on their feet. The joke ends with a **rhetorical question** to really highlight the point that is being made.
- **(I.v.50-51) Romeo:** *“Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.”*
 - This characterises Romeo as a very **fickle character** as in the scene before he was still hung up on Rosaline who he was **'love sick'** over.
 - The **rhetorical question** used is **ironic**. If anyone had asked Romeo this a few moments before he would have said with complete assurance that he was in love with Rosaline. Previously in scenes, Romeo had talked about Rosaline's beauty saying that she is **“too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,”** but now that he sees Juliet he disregards all that he has said, making him appear **unreliable** to the audience.
- **(I.v.57-58) Tybalt:** *“Now, by the stock and honor of my kin, To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.”*



- Tybalt is saying that Romeo's presence is **disrespectful** to his **family's honour**. He uses this to explain that if Tybalt was to kill him it would not be a sin because killing to protect honor is **justifiable** under the law. Shakespeare again introduces the idea of **male pride and honour** and its importance.
- Although Tybalt believes that it would not be a sin to kill Romeo it is unclear if there is actually any **Biblical support** for this. It is possible that this may be a case of **religious law and personal desires clashing**.
- **(I.v.64-67) 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.”*
 - Capulet argues that his nephew should leave Romeo alone as he is acting a cordial way and not creating any trouble. This also reveals a lot about Lord Capulet as while his family feuds with the Montagues he still has an open mind and can see the good of Romeo. This suggests that Capulet can be **level headed** which **juxtaposes** with Tybalt who is a very **rash** character.
 - This quote also reveals to the audience a lot about the character of Romeo. The Romeo that the other characters know is free from **unrequited love**. It is possible that before Romeo became **obsessed** with Rosaline he was a good man who conducted himself well. By saying that Verona **“brags”** of him suggests that Romeo is a very **popular character** so much so that they are even proud of him.
- **(I.v.74-75) Tybalt:** *“It fits when such a villain is a guest. I'll not endure him.”*
 - Tybalt describes Romeo as a **“villain”** which suggests that Tybalt believes himself to be the **hero**. Also, Tybalt is a **hyper-masculine** character and so believes that by not enduring Romeo he is somehow protecting the honour of his family.
- **(I.v.87) Capulet:** *“I'll make you quiet.”*
 - Capulet asserts his dominance through a **short simple sentence** which suggests how little he has to do to exercise his power as the **patriarch** of the family. It's important to note that Capulet does not ask Tybalt to be quiet but instead demands it.
- **(I.v.91-92) Tybalt:** *“I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall Now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall”*
 - Tybalt is essentially saying here that he will **‘back down’**. However, **‘gatecrashing the party’** may seem like a trivial thing now but it will not end well for Romeo.



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- It is possible that Shakespeare is again trying to foreshadow the negative impacts of the lovers meeting. More directly Tybalt's remarks **foreshadow** the fight between Tybalt and Romeo which leads to the **death** of two characters, Mercutio and Tybalt.
- **(I.v.92-110)** - The exchange between Romeo and Juliet.
- This is in **sonnet form** which is the **traditional** structure for a love poem. The way in which their lines complete each other to become a full sonnet shows how their love is true and complete.
- This **juxtaposes** Romeo's love for Rosaline, as the audience never really gets to hear from Rosaline, as his love is **one-sided**.

Act 2

Overview

This Act opens with **Romeo's Petrarchan sorrow over his love for Juliet**. He then becomes **joyous** when - in the famous '**balcony scene**' - they profess their love for one another. Romeo's mood instantly improves, which is noted by his friends (who, not knowing of Juliet, put the change down to his love for Rosaline). Things improve even more so for Romeo when, with the help of Juliet's Nurse, **he arranges a secret marriage between him and Juliet**.

The act ends with **the young couple being taken off to marry by Friar Lawrence**.

Benvolio and Mercutio are also prominent characters in this Act, as it is they who hunt for the mournful Romeo in Scene I, and it is they who notice his improved mood in **Scene IV**.



Prologue

The prologue summarises what has occurred previously in Act I: **Romeo has forgotten his ostensibly undying love** for Rosaline and is instead pursuing Juliet, whose "**looks**" are idealised. The difficulty of Romeo, a Montague, being with a Capulet is also highlighted.

Key Quotes

- **(II.0.3-4)** "*That fair for which love groaned for and would die, / With tender Juliet matched is now not fair*"



- **Repetition** of “*fair [...] fair*” creates a **cyclicity** between the old love (Rosaline) and the new love (Juliet). This points to the **transience of love** and the parallels between Romeo’s loves.
- **(II.0.13-14) “But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,/ Tempering extremities with extreme sweet”**
 - **Plosive alliteration** (“passion [...] power”) makes the emotions more potent.
 - **Assonance** of “*ee*” (“means [...] meet [...] extremities [...] extreme [...] sweet”) heightens the intensity of the love and hope alluded to in these lines.

Act 2 Scene 1

Summary

Romeo has drifted from the group after leaving the ball. The scene starts as he enters the Capulet’s orchard. He speaks of his desire to stay among the Capulets and resolves to do so.

Benvolio and Mercutio enter trying to look for Romeo and the former notices how Romeo has evidently jumped into the orchard. In an attempt to coax Romeo out of hiding, they **loudly and bawdily joke about Rosaline** (thinking that she is still the object of Romeo’s affections), hoping that an insulted Romeo will run out to confront them. Mercutio pretends to think that Romeo is dead and uses his words to “**conjure**” an image of Rosaline, still hoping to encourage Romeo to leave his hiding place. He uses a plethora of **double entendres**, hoping it will bring Romeo out. The two realise that Romeo is not going to leave his hiding place and so they leave.

Key Quotes

- **(II.i.1-2) Romeo: “Can I go forward when my heart is here? / Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.”**
 - This **foregrounds Romeo’s position as a Petrarchan lover**, though now the object of her affection is Juliet, not Rosaline. His use of a **rhetorical question** highlights his **solitude** and **self-questioning**, both characteristic of the Petrarchan lover.
 - Romeo’s **physical solitude** on stage also highlights his self-perceived position as an unrequited lover. He thinks he is alone in his love, and this is physically realised on stage.
 - In addition, his physical entrance into the Capulet’s orchard represents his attempts to enter Juliet’s affections.
- **(II.i.17-19) Mercutio: “I conjure thee [i.e. Romeo] by Rosaline’s bright eyes, / By her high forehead and her scarlet lip / By her [...] quivering thigh”**
 - Mercutio’s **objectification** of Rosaline through the repeated allusions to body parts: “**eyes [...] forehead [...] thigh**” is in stark contrast with Romeo’s heartfelt appeal just a few lines before.



- Mercutio appeals to an erotic kind of love which does not tally with Romeo's deep-set love and perhaps explains why the former's words fail to entice the latter out. This **serves to highlight the different approaches to love in the play.**
- Further, the development of **bodily imagery** from the tamer **lexis** of "eyes [...] forehead" to the more **sexual lexis** of "thigh" (and "the demesnes that there adjacent lie", an allusion to female genitalia) highlights how **Mercutio's language is becoming increasingly indecent in his vain attempts to find Romeo.**
- **(II.i.31-2) Mercutio: "Blind is [Romeo's] love, and best befits the dark." / "If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark."**
 - This dialogue between Benvolio and Mercutio is **ominous** in its discussion of Romeo's love. It is shrouded in "**dark[ness]**" and according to Mercutio is doomed to fail.
 - This **fatalistic sentiment** is emphasised by the **rhyming couplet** formed between "**dark**" and "**mark**".
- **(II.i.30-31) Benvolio: "Come, he hath hid himself among these trees / To be consorted with the humorous night"**
 - Benvolio recognises the **Petrarchan isolation** into which Romeo has retreated and the futility of attempting to coax him out of it. His allusion to Romeo's isolation among the "**trees**" and the "**night**" heightens the **sense of isolation**. Romeo has completely cut himself off from human contact, retreating wholly into nature.
 - This also conjures a **bathetic** (an unintentional anti-climax) **image** of Romeo sitting in a stop among the trees and the damp ("**humorous**") night; Benvolio's tone is disparaging in his description of Romeo isolated in the trees.
- **(II.i.41-42) Benvolio: "Go, then; for 'tis in vain / To seek him here that means not to be found."**
 - Benvolio's sentiment here **recognises again the extent of Romeo's self-imposed solitude**. It is impossible to find a character who "**means not to be found**", demonstrating the dramatic extent of his isolation.
 - Indeed, the fact that Benvolio and Mercutio exit after this line cements and augments his isolation – **Romeo's refusal to engage in a discussion with these others perpetuates his solitude.**

Act 2 Scene 2

Summary

This scene follows directly on from the Orchard scene. Romeo **leaves his hiding place** once Mercutio and Benvolio have left. Juliet begins to speak and calls out for Romeo (not now knowing he stands below her), asking him to abandon his Montague heritage so they can be together.



Romeo finally reveals himself and laments his hateful name (“Montague”), Juliet recognises his voice and she tells him how dangerous it is that he is in the Capulet orchard. He says his love knows no bounds and will not be threatened and he goes on to **express the great extent of his love for Juliet**.

After a momentary distraction posed by Juliet’s Nurse, Juliet promises to continue their discussion tomorrow and then leaves. Juliet re-enters the balcony once again and calls for Romeo in quiet tones. **This constant coming-and-going creates the image of two heady young lovers**. Juliet finalises their plans for the next day and tells Romeo how little she wants him to leave.

Key Quotes

- **(II.ii.10) Romeo: “It is my lady; O, it is my love!”**
 - The **medial caesura** represents fractiousness of Romeo’s love-smitten mind – his sentences breaks as he struggles to find the appropriate word to express his love.
 - This search for the appropriate word (“**lady [...] love**” – his noun choice increases in intensity) is **foregrounded by the repetition** of “**it is my [...] it is my.**” This creates the sense that Romeo is going over the same ideas again and again in his mind.
- **(II.ii.33) Juliet: “O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?”**
 - Juliet is **apostrophising** Romeo, augmenting the intensity of her love for him as she is trying to summon him from nothing.
 - The **repetition** of “**Romeo, Romeo [...] Romeo**” foregrounds her love, as Romeo is both lexically and literally at the forefront of her thoughts.
- **(II.ii.82-84) Romeo: “wert thou as far / As that vast shore wash’d with the farthest sea, / I should adventure for such merchandise”**
 - This **metaphor** is superficially a romantic comment on Romeo’s love - that he will seek Juliet out as a voyager would, no matter the obstacle.
 - However, the use of the **mercantile noun “merchandise”** undermines this romantic sentiment by **objectifying** Juliet and thus adhering to **stereotypes of Elizabethan male-female power dynamics**. This image also places Romeo as the **active lover** (seeking out Romeo) and Juliet as **passive** (waiting to be sought out), further adhering to such stereotypes.
- **(II.ii.1) Romeo: “He jests at scars that never felt a wound.”**
 - Here, Romeo points out the ease with which Benvolio and Mercutio, who have never loved can (and do), make fun of his love. This highlights the opposition between lovers and non-lovers in the play and, furthermore, the different kinds of love – **erotic and selfless** – that different characters epitomise.
 - This may also be understood as Romeo’s youthful naivety in so far as he perceives himself to be the only one to have ever loved in this fashion – indeed, Mercutio and Benvolio may in fact be more experienced than him in these matters.



- **(II.ii.34-36) Juliet:** *“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”*
 - Juliet’s line reveals the many oppositions underlying her relationship with Romeo: between the Montagues and Capulets, between fathers and sons, between political relationships and loving relationships. **The lexis of negation** (*“Deny [...] refuse [...] not [...] no longer”*) foregrounds these **tensions and oppositions** which underpin their relationship.
- **(II.ii.70) Juliet:** *“If they do see thee, they will murder thee”*
 - A more straightforward expression of the threat posed to Romeo by the Capulets. The **juxtaposition** between Juliet’s intimate use of the **pronoun** *“thee [...] thee”* and the **verb** *“murder”* highlights the conflicts underpinning their relationship.
- **(II.ii.63-65) Juliet:** *“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”*
 - The *“orchard”* acts as a **metaphor** for the obstacles surrounding Romeo’s love for Juliet - he may surmount them, but at great cost.
 - The ominous reference to *“death”* is **proleptic** of the tragic ending of the play and undercuts the frivolity and young love which otherwise underpins this scene.

Act 2, Scene 3

Summary

The scene opens with Friar Lawrence picking and commenting on flowers. Romeo walks in and Friar Lawrence immediately notices that he has had no sleep. Romeo eventually confesses that the reason for this is his newfound love for Juliet and that **he wants the Friar to marry the two of them**. The Friar is at first judgemental and angry of the speed with which Romeo

has left Rosaline for Juliet, but eventually **agrees to marry** them as it will - he thinks - diminish the hostilities between the Montagues and the Capulets.



<https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.timetoast.com/public/uploads/photos/3655119/event5.png>



Key Quotes

- **(II.iii.15-16) Friar:** *“O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies / In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities”*
 - The Friar’s religious character is here evinced by his ability to find grace in all things in nature - a reference perhaps to Thomas Aquinas’ (1225 - 1274) Natural Law Theory - that God’s grace is found in all things - which was a central idea for Catholicism.
 - The **positive lexis** (*“mickle [...] powerful grace [...] true”*) foregrounds this religiosity and characterises the Friar as an optimistic and spiritual individual.
- **(II.iii.21) Friar:** *“Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied / And vice itself sometime’s by action dignified”*
 - The Friar’s **sententia** highlights the fragility of virtue, a sentiment which is proleptic of the downfall of Romeo and Juliet’s affair. This also serves to highlight the Friar’s cautious and rational self, further highlighted when he later cautions Romeo against a hasty marriage.
- **(II.iii.43) Romeo:** *“the sweeter rest was mine.”*
 - Romeo’s claim that his sleeplessness due to love is **“sweeter”** than sleep itself augments his characterisation as the **Petrarchan lover**, with all his normal human faculties being disrupted by his love for Juliet.
 - His positivity in this scene is in contrast to his melancholy in 2.1 and early in 2.2 (when he was **speaking largely in prose, whereas now he speaks in verse**), highlighting how his meeting with Juliet has improved his emotional state, thus highlighting the purity and intensity of their love.
- **(II.iii.67-68) Friar:** *“Young men’s love, then, lies / Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes”*
 - The **pun** on **“lies”** augments the negativity surrounding the Friar’s sentiment - he doesn’t believe Romeo’s love is genuine, but is comprised of **“lies”**.
- **(II.iii.93-94) Friar:** *“O, let us hence; I stand on sudden haste” / “Wisely and slowly; they stumble that run fast”*
 - There is **parallelism** within this exchange between Romeo and the Friar (a shorted phrase, followed by a semi-colon, followed by a longer phrase), yet a disjunct between the content of their messages. This highlights how, superficially, the two are working towards similar ends, yet for different reasons.



Act 2, Scene 4

Summary

Romeo joins Benvolio and Mercutio who are bantering on a street. Romeo's happiness is noticed and attributed by Benvolio and Mercutio to his love for Rosaline. The three of them engage in a **fast-paced repartee**.

Juliet's Nurse and Peter enter, only for Mercutio to berate the Nurse for her looks. The Nurse is looking for Romeo (she does not know him yet) and, once Benvolio and Mercutio have left, **delivers to him a message from Juliet and warns Romeo not to mess Juliet around**. Romeo tells the Nurse that ropes will be delivered to Juliet so that she can escape her room, and that **she must go to 'confession' that afternoon so that the Friar can marry them**.

Key Quotes

- **(II.iv.13-15) Mercutio: "Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead: stabb'd with / a white wench's black eye; run through the era with / a love-song"**
 - Whilst he is talking about Romeo and Rosaline, Mercutio's sentiment here is equally applicable to the relationship between Romeo and Juliet. The **juxtaposition** between a **lexis of death** ("**dead [...] stabb'd [...] black [...] run through**") and one of love ("**white [...] love-song**") highlights the fragility and conflicts of their relationship.
 - Whilst Mercutio's **tone is jovial**, his words are **proleptic** of Romeo's death as a result of his lover.
- **(II.iv.67-68) Mercutio: "thou hast more of he wild goose in one of thy / wits than, I am sure, I have in my whole five"**
 - The **familiar tone** is highlighted by the **use of the personal pronouns "thou [...] thy"**.
 - Mercutio's banterous line makes clear the mastery that Romeo has over words and thus characterises him as an educated character.
 - However, when contrasted with Romeo's foolishness throughout the play (such as embarking on a dangerous love affair, or thinking Juliet dead), this line's espousal of Romeo's intellect seems invalid. This creates the image of Romeo as a rational creature (intelligent, good with words) but who has been **overridden by his passions** (love for Juliet).
- **(II.iv.156-159) Nurse: "the gentlewoman is young; / and, therefore, if you should deal double with her, / truly it were an ill thing [...] and very weak dealing"**
 - The Nurse's protective sentiment highlights her care for Juliet as well as reinforcing the pervasive sentiment that Romeo is a foolish youngster who may lead Juliet astray.
 - The use of the **adjectives "ill [...] weak"** augments this **image of deficiency**, depicting the false lover as a lesser human being, and one which saps others of their health.



- This line also highlights Juliet's vulnerability via the use of the adjective **"young"** which **connotes fragility and tenderness** and thus the dangers of Romeo pursuing her.
- **(II.iv.195-196) Nurse: "Doth not rosemary and Romeo / begin both with a letter?"**
 - The Nurse highlights the parallels between Romeo and rosemary, highlighting Romeo's effeminacy by **associating him with the traditionally female imagery of flowers**.
 - Rosemary is a **symbol traditionally associated with love**, hence its use when describing Romeo as a lover, but also with **lust**. Again, the audience is made to question the sincerity of Romeo's love. Rosemary, like Romeo, represents a combination of both selfless love and selfish lust.
 - **Rosemary is also a flower for mourning** and so the Nurse's line is unknowingly proleptic of the tragic ending of this affair.

Act 2, Scene 5

Summary

The scene opens with Juliet nervously awaiting the Nurse's return. When the Nurse does return, Juliet is impatient to hear the news she bears and she is eventually told of the play to marry Romeo.

Key Quotes

- **(II.v.4-6) Juliet: "Love's heralds should be thoughts, / Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams / Driving back shadows"**
 - Juliet uses **natural** and **pleasing imagery** ("**love's heralds [...] glide [...] sun's beams**") which signals a return to the pure imagery of love which has been so absent in the previous scenes. Again, this is an exploration of the different kinds of love within this world.
 - However, there is an ominous undercurrent in her words. Her impatience points to a degree of childishness within her love; this undercurrent is highlighted by the **juxtaposition** between the **"shadows"** (which **"should be"** driven back, but aren't) and the **"sun's beams"**



<https://pining.com/original-image/41f95132f40aaae96e8d0749e6829.jpg>



- **(II.v.28-65)** *“I pray thee speak; good, good nurse, speak [...] Is thy news good or bad? [...] Let me be satisfied, is’t good or bad? [...] What says my love? [...] Come, what says Romeo?”*
 - By inserting this impatient exchange between Juliet and the tired Nurse, Shakespeare **increases the dramatic tension** which reflects the anxiety felt by Juliet.
 - **The repetitious nature of these lines** also characterises Juliet as an impatient child rather than a desperate lover which somewhat undermines the sincerity of their affair.
- **(II.v.43-44) Nurse:** *“He is not the flower of courtesy, but I’ll warrant him as gentle as a lamb”*
 - The Nurse offers one of the few more **objective descriptions** of Romeo. She recognises his gentility, yet also his innocence and brashness.
 - The **imagery** created by the **simile “gentle as a lamb”** is **Christ-like in implications** (Jesus as the Lamb of God). This suggests Romeo could be Juliet’s saviour, but also suggests he is a sacrificial character.
 - This means there are both positive and negative connotations to this image.

Act 2, Scene 6

Summary

The scene opens in Friar Lawrence’s cell, where he is **giving Romeo advice for a good marriage**. Juliet enters and the Friar takes them off to be married.

Key Quotes

- **(II.vi.1-2) Friar:** *“So smile the heavens upon this holy act / That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!”*
 - Friar Lawrence’s opening lines in this scene immediately imposes a **tragic atmosphere** for Romeo and Juliet’s marriage. He mentions **“sorrow”** in **“after-hours”** which signals to the audience the onset of tragedy and is thus **proleptic of the coming downfall**.
 - The Friar seems to be tempting fate with his mere mention of **“sorrow”**
 - Romeo is even more explicit in his tempting of fate (**Cf. II.v.7-8**) and thus his tragic death is perhaps inevitable (or so it would seem to the superstitious Elizabethan audience who strongly adhered to the ideas of fate).
- **(II.v.14-15) Friar:** *“Therefore love moderately; long love doth so; / Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow”*



<https://media.vanityfair.com/photos/5817736d2d5899f533f7c1b5/master/pass/t-romeo-and-juliet-fashion.jpg>



- The fragmented sentence structure slows down the Friar's speech which reflects the lesson he is trying to teach the young lovers. The **repeated semicolons** make his words just as slow as the **love he idealises**.
- The **consonance of "o" sounds** adds to this slow-paced dialogue
- **(II.vi.36-37) Friar: "you shall not stay alone / Till holy church incorporates two in one"**
 - As the Friar professes to join Romeo and Juliet in marriage, **a sense of coupling is foregrounded by the rhyming couplet** between **"alone"** and **"one"**
 - However, the fact that this is **not a full rhyme** undermines the security of Romeo and Juliet's coupling from the first

Act 3

Overview

This is a very **pivotal act** as it is the **climax** of the whole play.

It starts with a fight on the streets of Verona in a public place between the Montague men and Capulet men, which ends with Tybalt **murdering** Mercutio. In an act of **revenge** Romeo murders Tybalt. Due to this, the Prince **banishes** Romeo.

Juliet waits in her home for Romeo but instead receives news that Romeo killed Tybalt and is banished. She's **distraught** at this information and threatens to end her life.



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Romeo goes to see the Friar who tells him of his banishment, he mirrors Juliet's emotions wanting to end his life. The Nurse arrives relaying information about Juliet's condition. The Friar helps by coming up with a plan, he tells Romeo to **flee to Mantua** and wait for more information. Just before Romeo flees, he visits Juliet so that they can finally consummate their marriage.

The morning after the Capulet household is still **grieving**, Capulet in hopes of making Juliet feel better decides his daughter should marry Paris. Juliet **refuses** which leads to her father threatening to **disown** her. Juliet seeks out the **Friar** for his help.



Act 3, Scene 1

Summary

The scene starts with the Montague men Mercutio and Benvolio in a public place. Tybalt comes looking for Romeo to fight.

Romeo arrives and Tybalt tries to goad him into a fight but Romeo refuses, trying to keep the peace. Mercutio becomes offended on behalf of Romeo and starts a fight with Tybalt. Again, Romeo tries to keep the peace, but Mercutio is stabbed by Tybalt and dies.



<https://www.emaze.com/@ALZROCLL/Romeo-and-Juliet>.

Romeo becomes filled with a murderous rage and kills Tybalt. After this Romeo runs away, the Prince learns of the incident through Benvolio. The Prince punishes Romeo for what he has done and so banishes him.

Key Quotes

- **(III.i.3-4) Benvolio:** *“And if we meet, we shall not ’scape a brawl, For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.”*
 - Benvolio is saying here that it is the **hot weather** which makes men more inclined to fight, so much so that it is **inevitable**. To an English Elizabethan audience Verona would have been known for its hot weather and **stereotypical Italian passion**.
 - Another interpretation could be that battle is inevitable on a social level as to reject a battle would have been **detrimental to a man’s status infringing on his masculinity** in the eyes of society.
- **(III.i.16-17) Mercutio:** *“And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something. Make it a word and a blow.”*
 - Mercutio is attempting to goad Tybalt into a fight, trying to make fun of Tybalt. This could also be Shakespeare’s voice commenting on the **power of words** and literature, that when used correctly they can be as powerful as a physical blow. The use of rhythmic punctuation interrupts his dialogue may be being used for dramatic effect.
- **(III.i.31-32) Tybalt:** *“Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford No better term than this: thou art a villain.”*
 - Tybalt confesses his hatred for Romeo, Tybalt mirrors Act 1 scene 5 calling Romeo a **“villain”**. The term **“villain”** suggests that Romeo is the enemy because he is from another family. This is **ironic** because through Romeo’s marriage to Juliet they have joined families. While Tybalt believes that he is defending his family’s honour



from Romeo, the reality is that Romeo and Tybalt are actually from the same family and so their loyalties now lie with each other.

- **(III.i.33-36) 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.”*
 - Romeo tries to make peace here and the audience may think that he is about to confess to the marriage. He repeats back to Tybalt the word **“villain”** but negates it by telling him **“I am none”**.
- **(III.i.44-46) Mercutio:** *“O calm dishonourable, vile submission! Alla stoccata carries it away. (draws his sword) Tybalt, you ratcatcher, will you walk?”*
 - Mercutio serves as the voice for society, relaying the audience’s belief. He believes that Romeo’s peace-making attitude is **“vile”** as it goes against their nature.
 - **“Alla stoccata”** is a move used in fencing. Mercutio’s phrase suggests that Romeo not wanting to fight is not just **“dishonourable”** but actually a **disease** in which the only **cure** is to be a real man and fight.
- **(III.i.59) Mercutio:** *“A plague o’ both your houses! “*
 - This is one of the most famous lines in the whole play and is literally a curse on both the Montagues and Capulets. It can be argued that this is the **turning point** in the play.
 - It acts as a **catalyst** as it is from this moment that everything in the lives of Romeo and Juliet goes wrong. Alternatively, it is possible that Mercutio’s final words aren’t a catalyst but just more **foreshadowing**, as the fates of Romeo and Juliet were set long before and had nothing to do with Mercutio.
- **(III.i.73-77) Romeo:** *“My reputation stained With Tybalt’s slander. —Tybalt, that an hour Hath been my kinsman! O sweet Juliet beauty hath made me effeminate And in my temper softened valor’s steel!”*
 - This is the moment that Romeo realises the ‘error’ of his ways. He blames it all on Juliet as he believes that the love that he has for her has made him like a woman and **weak**.
 - Shakespeare uses a **metaphor** to describe what Romeo believes has taken place. Romeo believes himself to be a man of **“steel”** and **“valor”** which means courage.
- **(III.i.90-91) Romeo:** *“Staying for thine to keep him company. Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.”*
 - Romeo now takes his revenge. He tells Tybalt that Mercutio is dead. At this point, Romeo is so filled with rage that he no longer has worth on his own life.
 - This is the same attitude that Romeo takes on later in the play when he finds out about Juliet’s death.
 - This shows Romeo’s depth for love and how throughout the whole play he only ever **lives in extremes** whether that be extreme sadness or in this case extreme anger.



- **(III.i.146-148) Benvolio:** *“Not Romeo, Prince, he was Mercutio’s friend. His fault concludes but what the law should end, The life of Tybalt.”*
 - Benvolio talks on behalf of Romeo. Benvolio is saying here that Romeo is **justified** for his actions. This also reflects the laws of time as revenge was thought to be a kind of justice, and so the actions of Romeo were justified.
- **(III.i.149) Prince:** *“And for that offence Immediately we do exile him hence.”*
 - The scene ends with Romeo being **banished**.

Act 3, Scene 2

Summary

The scene starts with a **soliloquy** from Juliet as she looks forward to Romeo coming to her room so that they can consummate the marriage. The Nurse enters with news of Romeo, telling Juliet about how **Tybalt has been killed by Romeo** and Romeo has been **banished**.



https://66.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_mdd1udDOeS1r8vo7wo1_1280.jpg

At first, Juliet grieves over Tybalt believing Romeo to be a villain but after a while becomes more **level headed supporting Romeo**, now worried that she will never see him again. The Nurse calms Juliet down by saying she will go and find Romeo believing that he is probably with Friar Laurence.

Key Quotes

- **(III.ii.21-24) Juliet:** *“Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die, Take him and cut him out in little stars, And he will make the face of heaven so fine That all the world will be in love with night”*
 - Juliet is looking forward to Romeo coming to her room. The image is quite **startling** to the reader because of how **graphic the image** of cutting is.
 - Juliet's words also **foreshadow** the death of Romeo as they foreshadow Romeo returning back to the **stars**. It also adds to the concept of Romeo and Juliet as star-crossed lovers and their love as **written in the stars**.
- **(III.ii.74-77) Juliet:** *“O serpent heart hid with a flowering face! Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave? Beautiful tyrant! Fiend angelical! Dove-feathered raven, wolvish-ravening lamb!”*
 - The **confusion** that Juliet is feeling is reflected through her **oxymoronic** language, Juliet no longer knows what to think of Romeo. Before this Juliet believed Romeo to



be perfect and now the information that she is getting from the Nurse no longer fits this picture and so the image in her mind is distorted creating **contradictory images**.

- **(III.ii.93-94) Juliet:** *“Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit, For ’tis a throne where honor may be crowned.”*
 - Juliet is telling the Nurse that she is supporting her husband because there is nothing that can shame him. Juliet calls his brow a **“throne”** which means she equates Romeo to royalty despite his sins.
 - The audience may perceive Juliet’s **unconditional love** in two ways, it could inspire them. Alternatively, it may prove Romeo and Juliet’s love to be **unrealistic** and just young children’s infatuation which is **blinding** them.
- **(III.ii.86-88) Nurse:** *“There’s no trust, No faith, no honesty in men. All perjured, All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.”*
 - The Nurse is basically saying men are trash. The Nurse says that Romeo, like all men, is **wicked**. The use of **asyndetic listing** creates an **overwhelming** concept, as though men’s faults are endless.
 - Alternatively, the nurse could also be trying to suggest that Romeo’s faults are not his own but just the **consequence of his biology**.

Act 3, Scene 3

Summary

In this scene, the audience sees a Romeo in Friar Laurence’s cell. He is completely devastated at the news of his **banishment** and believes it to be worse than death.

Friar tells him to calm down and tries to tell him that death would be worse. The Nurse arrives telling the men of Juliet’s condition. The Friar comes up with a plan to save the lovers, he tells Romeo to visit Juliet’s room later in the night and then leave early in the morning to **Mantua**, waiting for news from the Friar.



<https://screenmusings.org/movie/dvd/Romeo-and-Juliet/images/Romeo-and-Juliet-1996-0682.jpg>



Key Quotes

- **(III.iii.12-14) Romeo:** *“Ha, banishment! Be merciful, say “death,” For exile hath more terror in his look, Much more than death. Do not say “banishment.” (17-18) “There is no world without Verona walls But purgatory, torture, hell itself.”*
 - Romeo believes banishment to be worse than death because it means that he cannot see his love, Juliet.
 - To the Elizabethan audience, the only thing worse than death would have been **purgatory** which was a **medieval Catholic doctrine** in a sort of limbo after death, where people are meant to atone as last way to reach Heaven, this was supposed to be **“torture”**.
- **(III.iii.83) Friar:** *“There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.”*
 - This description of Romeo is **reminiscent of Romeo in Act 1** when he was still heartbroken over Rosaline. His father describes Romeo using natural imagery to show his desolation over Rosaline - **“With tears augmenting the fresh morning’s dew”** whereas the Friar’s description is more negative. He suggests that Romeo is **intoxicated** so much that he is not acting in a rational manner.
 - These contrasting descriptions typify Romeo’s love for Rosaline and Juliet as different, but also the same in the way that it leads Romeo to not behave like himself.
 - Secondly, the Friar’s description of Romeo’s tears also reveals the **Friar’s disapproval**, he makes it clear that Romeo’s behaviour is a fault of his **“own”**.
- **(III.iii.87-89) Nurse:** *“Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering. Stand up, stand up. Stand, an you be a man. For Juliet’s sake, for her sake, rise and stand”*
 - Shakespeare uses **polysyndetic listing** to emphasise Juliet’s emotions. The use of the **conjunction “and”** makes it seem as though Juliet sadness is never-ending. The listing is also **repetitive** and maybe suggests that the Nurse is tired of Juliet.
 - The Nurse tells Romeo to **“stand”** and **“rise”** these **verbs** connote going above and beyond for Juliet which is ironic as when the Nurse arrives Romeo is **“on the ground” paralysed** due to the pain.
 - The Nurse also tells Romeo to be a man which also adds to the **traditional idea of masculinity**, which is a theme that is present throughout the play.
- **(III.iii.106-108) Romeo:** *“In what vile part of this anatomy Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack The hateful mansion. (draws his dagger)”*
 - This statement **mirrors Act 1 Scene 5** when Juliet is asking herself **“Wherefore art thou Romeo”** asking herself the importance of a name saying **“What’s Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part Belonging to a man.”** Juliet concludes that the name is not in any part of the body, however, Romeo again goes through this even ready to cut the part out of him. The fact that this idea is repeated suggests that the lovers have not grown throughout the course of the play.
 - The fact that Romeo **“draws his dagger” foreshadows** the deaths to come in the play.



- **(III.iii.109-110) Friar:** *“Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art. Thy tears are womanish.”*
 - The Friar asks a **rhetorical question** to Romeo because he believes that Romeo is not acting like a man. In the Elizabethan times, a man showing emotion would have been odd, as those were tendencies of women. Throughout the play, the audience has learnt that Romeo is a very **emotional man** as the audience only sees him when he is heartbroken or in love.
- **(III.iii.163-164) Nurse:** *“Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir. (gives ROMEO JULIET’s ring)”*
 - The ring that the Nurse gives Romeo from Juliet is a symbol of their love for each other, the circle represents how it is endless and will last forever.

Act 3, Scene 4

Summary

This scene is extremely **short** and consists of the Capulets and Paris discussing Juliet’s fate. The Capulets are still **grieving** over Tybalt’s death and Juliet is extremely sad for both Tybalt and Romeo (but this is not to the knowledge of her family). Paris is still pursuing Juliet through Lord Capulet, and they decide in hopes of **cheering** Juliet that she **will marry Paris**.



<https://screenmusings.org/movie/dvd/Romeo-and-Juliet/images/Romeo-and-Juliet-1996-1179.jpg>

Key Quotes

- **(III.iv.8) Paris:** *“These times of woe afford no time to woo.”*
 - This statement reveals a lot about Paris’s character as while he is saying one thing his actions are **contradicting them**. While he says that this time of sadness is not the time to try an **“woo”** Juliet this is exactly what he is doing. This suggests to the reader that Paris is not a man of his word and so is an untrustworthy character.
- **(III.iv.11) Lady Capulet:** *“Tonight she is mewed up to her heaviness.”*
 - **“Mewed”** means to be **confined** to her own sadness, this suggests that Juliet is in an **all-consuming sadness** which has **isolated** her from her family. This quote can be seen as an **iceberg quote** because there is a lot more to it.
 - Juliet is isolated from her family due to her sadness but she has always been isolated from her family her whole life. There is evidence of this in Act 1 when Lady



Capulet has to ask the Nurse for the age of her own daughter as they have spent so little time together.

- Juliet is also increasingly isolated from her family because she is keeping a **secret** from them, which is that she is in love with their enemy.
- **(III.iv.13-14) Lord Capulet: “I think she will be ruled In all respects by me. Nay, more, I doubt it not.—”**
 - Lord Capulet is **completely convinced** that Juliet will do what he says, he has no doubt in his mind. This suggests that Lord Capulet is used to people doing what he says.
 - There is a **dramatic irony** here as the audience, of course, knows that Juliet is already married and so cannot marry Paris as **bigamy** was a sin and against the law. This means that Juliet has no choice but to disobey her father, so the audience is able to feel the **tension grow**.

Act 3, Scene 5

Summary

This is the **morning after** Romeo and Juliet have spent the night together. The lovers are forced to say goodbye quickly.

Lady Capulet is at the door with news that her father has made plans for Juliet to marry Paris and hopes that this will make her feel better. However, this does the **exact opposite**, Juliet becomes **extremely emotional**. Her father then enters expecting a positive reaction and is confused at Juliet's reaction, believing her to be **ungrateful**. They get into a **heated argument** where her father essentially says that he will disown her if she does not marry Paris.



<https://tse2.mm.bing.net/th?id=OIP.WLsTn29jqNbcKZ93bf-SAgHaJg>

Juliet goes to the Nurse for advice, she tells Juliet to just marry Paris because Romeo is banished. Juliet hates this advice and **seeks the Friar** for comfort and advice.

Key Quotes

- **(III.v.12-15) Juliet: “Yon light is not daylight, I know it, I. It is some meteor that the sun exhales”**
 - Juliet does not want Romeo to leave and so wills it that the sun will not come out. Juliet **personifies** the sun, it **“exhales”** as though it breathes. This again links Romeo and Juliet's love to something out of this world, that needs some kind of **‘out of this world’ or above this world intervention**.



- **(III.v.17-19) Romeo:** *“Let me be ta'en. Let me be put to death. I am content, so thou wilt have it so. I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye.”*
 - This quote shows the amount of Romeo's **infatuation** with Juliet, he is ready to deny laws of the earth and to even die for her to prove his love for her. This is again **foreshadowing** Romeo's death as it commits the greatest act of love.
 - Romeo uses the phrase **“let me”** which suggests that Romeo is completely **surrendering**, he is no longer trying to put up a fight he is in complete **submission** to Juliet. This is **uncommon behaviour** for men as traditionally it was the woman's role to be submissive in the Elizabethan era.
- **(III.v.36) Romeo:** *“More light and light, more dark and dark our woes!”*
 - Romeo is basically saying here that the more light that comes in, the more they can see their troubles. This is because after the night that they had together the morning means that Romeo has to run away to Mantua.
 - There is also a **dramatic irony** here as the lovers don't even know how many more troubles are coming (for example the fact that Juliet will be **forced** to marry Paris).
- **(III.v.41) Juliet:** *“Then, window, let day in and let life out.”*
 - Juliet **echoes** what Romeo has said in the quote above but in a more **literal** sense. She means that as the day comes it is as though her life is leaving her.
 - Alternatively, it could mean that as Romeo is leaving, it is as though she is dying because of how strong her bond is with Romeo.
- **(III.v.61-62) Juliet:** *“Be fickle, fortune, For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,”*
 - Juliet is appealing to fate now, which could suggest how desperate she is.
 - It is also **ironic** because throughout the play it seems that every power that could be is against the two lovers and has tried to pull them apart, even fate.
- **(III.v.88-91) Lady Capulet:** *“I'll send to one in Mantua, Where that same banished runagate doth live, Shall give him such an unaccustomed dram That he shall soon keep Tybalt company.”*
 - Lady Capulet is saying here that she will send someone to Mantua after Romeo to poison him. This is, of course, more foreshadowing as it tells the audience the way in which Romeo will die in the final scene.
 - Lady Capulet's words **echo** what Romeo said to Tybalt before his death Romeo says *“Staying for thine to keep him company. Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.”*



- **(III.v.121-122) Juliet:** *“I will not marry yet. And when I do, I swear It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,”*
 - Juliet says this to her mother which is both a **truth and a lie**, it is true that she does not want to marry Paris but the lie is that she hates Romeo.
 - It is possible that Juliet may have made a mistake which is evident through the **comma** after Romeo which **signifies a pause**. The extra clause may be her trying to redeem herself before she reveals the lie that she has been hiding.
- **(III.v.134-137) Capulet:** *“The ship is your body which is sailing on the salt flood of your tears. The winds are your sighs. Your sighs and your tears are raging. Unless you calm down, tears and sighs will overwhelm your body and sink your ship”*
 - Capulet uses an **extended metaphor** of the sea to illustrate Juliet’s emotions. He equates her **“body”** to a **“ship”** which is rocking on her **“tears”** which is the sea.
 - Her **sighs** are described as the **wind**. Capulet is essentially saying here that her emotions are taking over her which is effective to **drowning in her emotions**.
 - This description mirrors the Lord Montagues’ description of Romeo in **Act 1** when he is heartbroken over Rosaline. Montague says that his tears are like the fresh morning **“dew”** and his sighs add to the **“clouds”**. This shows Romeo and Juliet as being cut from the same cloth, really affirming their role as **star-crossed lovers**.
- **(III.v.154-157) Capulet:** *“To go with Paris to Saint Peter’s Church, Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither. Out, you green sickness, carrion! Out, you baggage! You tallow face!”*
 - A **“hurdle”** was something that they would take through the streets that would carry **traitors** as a means of punishment. This suggests that Capulet believes that Juliet is a traitor because she is not doing everything that she can to help the family.
 - Lord Capulet’s anger is expressed through the insults to Juliet which are arranged in a **rule of three**. The list of insults comes out with ease which hints to the audience that maybe his tenderness for Juliet earlier on in the play was false...is he the good father we thought he was at the beginning of the play?
- **(III.v.193) Capulet:** *“hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,”*
 - The **polysyndetic listing** makes Capulet’s words sharp and quick which reflects the way in which the words may have affected Juliet, like strategically aimed bullets. Capulet is essentially telling Juliet that she will be disowned if she does not do what he says.
 - While the Elizabethan would think that Capulet’s reaction is proper, the 21st-century audience would believe Capulet’s reactions to be overbearing and just a result of the **patriarchal environment** they are a part of.
- **(III.v.218-224) Nurse:** *“I think it best you married with the county. Oh, he’s a lovely gentleman. Romeo’s a dishclout to him. An eagle”*
 - The Nurse tells Juliet that she should marry Paris, which doesn't go down well with Juliet.
 - The Nurse **compares** the two men: Paris is the obvious choice to the Nurse and probably to the audience as well because of his **wealthy status**.



- However, this choice proves a **moral** conundrum. As Juliet is already married to Romeo she cannot marry Paris as this would count as **bigamy** (marrying someone who is already married) was a big **sin**.
- The things that the Nurse compares the men to is also very interesting. The Nurse compares Romeo to a “**dishclout**” which is an **object** while Paris is an “**eagle**” an animal which is a **symbol of pride and honour** but it also has **agency**. This suggests that if she marries Paris, Juliet will have more freedom and agency than she does being married to Romeo where they have to hide their relationship from the outside world.
- This is also ironic because Romeo is of high status but the way in which the Nurse describes him is as though he is a peasant which just expresses the extent of the Nurses of disapproval.

Act 4

Overview

This scene tracks **the action that occurs following the arranged marriage between Paris and Juliet**. Juliet's grief is expressed to the Friar who - seeing a potentially fruitful marriage between Romeo and Juliet - contrives a plan via which **she will feign death**, thus allowing her to escape this marriage and be with Romeo. Juliet takes the potion and her family find her “**dead**”, much to their **grief**.

Act 4, Scene 1

Summary

The scene opens with the Friar talking about Juliet with Paris. Juliet enters and Paris expresses certainty in their love; Juliet tells Paris she has come for confession which causes him to leave.

Once Romeo has left **Juliet breaks down in grief in front of the Friar**, expressing her desire to **die instead of marrying Paris**. The Friar offers his alternative plan: that evening, **she should drink a potion which puts her in a death-like state for 42 hours**, which would cause her family to think she's dead and thus entomb her in the Capulet tomb. **The Friar will tell Romeo of the plan by letter** so that he can arrive at the tomb for when Juliet awakes, and run away with her with no one else the wiser. Juliet agrees.



https://10.wp.com/www.english.emory.edu/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Ward.Juliet.jpg?zoom=2



Key Quotes

- **(IV.i.4-5) Friar Lawrence:** *“You say you do not know the lady’s mind; / Uneven is the course; I like it not”*
 - The Friar’s **ominous prolepsis** is foregrounded in the **medial caesura** of the second line which makes the line, just like the **“course”**, uneven.
 - The use of the **adjective “uneven”** would have been a pertinent one to the Elizabethan audience as it is a representation of **a disruption of the all-important equilibrium** (see Context; Great Chain of Being).
- **(IV.i.52-54) Juliet:** *“If [...] thou canst give no help, / Do thou but call my resolution wise, / And with this knife I’ll help it presently”*
 - The depths of Juliet’s sorrow are here made explicit in an almost throw-away reference to suicide. The **euphemism** of **“help it”** foregrounds the **juxtaposition** between her innocence and her suicidal intent.
- **(IV.i.77-88) Juliet:** *“O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris, / From off the battlements of any tower [...] And I will do it without fear or doubt, / To live an unstain’d wife to my sweet love.”*
 - Juliet’s use of a **morbid and macabre lexis** (**“thievish [...] lurk [...] serpents [...] roaring bears [...] charnel house [...] bones [...] skulls [etc.]”**) reflects the depression into which she has been driven by her engagement to Paris. Death is on her mind, and these images leak into her language.
 - This reflects the potentially harmful nature of Petrarchan love in so far as it so easily morphs into ideas of hate and death, rather than those of love.

Act 4, Scene 2

Summary

The Capulet household is discussing Juliet’s intransigence to the marriage when Juliet enters and - as per Friar Lawrence’s orders - professes her agreement to the marriage. **The marriage is planned for the next morning, and the Capulets joyously make the preparations.**

Key Quotes

- **(IV.ii.21-22) Juliet:** *“Pardon, I beseech you. / Henceforth I am ever rul’d by you”*
 - The falsity of Juliet’s apology is hinted at by its **hyperbolic nature**. The **repetition** of **“you”** allows her to implicitly take attention away from her actions.
 - The phrase **“I am ever rul’d by you”** demonstrates the **“male-female ruler-ruled”** nature of **male-female relations in the Elizabethan era**. Juliet’s submissiveness to her father and to Paris, however, is contrasted with her egalitarian relationship with Romeo in other scenes, demonstrating the purity of their love.



- **(IV.ii.29-30) Lord Capulet:** *“Let me see the County; / Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither”*
 - Lord Capulet’s excitement and agitation is demonstrated through the **fragmented nature of his dialogue**. Faced with Juliet’s apology, he has hundreds of things suddenly to do and his **repetitious** and **monosyllabic dialogue** reflects this.
- **(IV.ii.37) Lord Capulet:** *“Go, nurse, go with her/ We’ll go to church to-morrow.”*
 - Again, this breach of Church-going protocol demonstrates Capulet’s agitation and fragmented mindset. Furthermore, it **ominously foreshadows** how the subsequent days will play out; they will **“go to church”** but because of Juliet’s death, rather than for the marriage.

Act 4, Scene 3

Summary

Juliet hurries the Nurse and Lady Capulet out of her room and prepares herself for taking Friar Lawrence’s potion. **She has many worries**: that the potion may be poison, that she will wake before Romeo arrives at the tomb, that she will be trapped in the tomb, that she will go mad on waking and commit suicide. However, she has a sudden thought of Tybalt’s ghost harrying Romeo, and this **encourages her to finally drink the potion**.

Key Quotes

- **(IV.iii.19) Juliet:** *“My dismal scene I needs must act alone”*
 - Shakespeare shows that for Juliet to be rejoined with her lover she must be alone. Her on stage isolation is **paradoxical**; Shakespeare shows that Juliet must be alone and in isolation in order to be with her one true love, Romeo.
- **(IV.iii.33) Juliet:** *“I fear it is [...] There’s a fearful plot”*
 - The **repetition** of **“fear”** reflects Juliet’s youthful overactive imagination and reinforces the odd fact that she should be in these circumstances. Furthermore, this increases the tension for the audience (who expect a tragic ending).
- **(IV.iii.33-35) Juliet:** *“Shall I not then be stifled in the vault, / To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in, / And there die strangeld ere my Romeo comes.”*
 - Juliet’s utmost fear is not death, but **isolation**. This is foregrounded in the **separation** between **“I”** at the start of the sentence and **“Romeo”** at the end, as well as the content of her message. This further demonstrates the extent of her love and how it has overtaken all other aspects of her life.
- **(IV.iii.36-54) Juliet:** *“Or, if I live, is it not very like / The horrible conceit of death and night [...] Desp’rate brains”*



- This large section is **erratically punctuated and all one sentence**, reflecting Juliet's almost hysterical anxiety. She is endlessly spilling out words to prolong the inevitable.
- Her eventual drinking of the potion looks as though it's a spontaneous and foolhardy decision, which is proleptic of its failure.
- Furthermore, there is a **lexical set of morbid words** in this section ("**horrible [...] death [...] terror [...] bones [...] bloody [...] fest' ring**"), reflecting Juliet's depressed thoughts and foreshadowing the upcoming onset of much death.

Act 4, Scene 4

Summary

This scene sees the Capulet household **making arrangements** for the **marriage of Juliet and Paris**. Lord Capulet is making sure the food is perfect, that the supplies are in order, and that Paris arrives. He seems excited about the affair, and the scene ends with Lord Capulet telling the Nurse to wake Juliet.

Key Quotes

- **(IV.iv.1-2) "Hold, take these keys, and fetch more spices, nurse." / "They call for dates and quinces in the pastry"**
 - **This banal dialogue between Lady Capulet and the Nurse comes immediately after Juliet's dramatic act** and highlights the conflict between her depressed state and the day-to-day life going on around her. This augments her isolation by creating the sense that Juliet is cut off from the world around her.
- **(IV.iv.3-6) Capulet: "Come stir, stir, stir! [...] Spare not for cost"**
 - Lord Capulet's haste is foregrounded by the **sibilance and fragmented sentence structure**, augmenting the image of a worried and organised father (thus making the disruption of this organisation by Juliet's death all the more impactful).

Act 4, Scene 5

Summary

The scene opens with **the Nurse finding Juliet "dead"**; Lord and Lady Capulet and Paris soon find out and grieve outwardly. The Friar - who, of course, knows that Juliet is not really dead - urges calm and asks that **Juliet be carried to the tomb** (where the next part of his plan can play out). Paris expresses his grief in a repartee with musicians.



Key Quotes

- **(IV.v.1-3) Nurse:** *“Mistress! What, mistress! Juliet! [...] Why, lamb! Why, lady! [...] Why, love, I say! Madam! Sweetheart! Why, bride!”*

- The Nurse’s **fragmented and continuous dialogue** represents her gradual realisation that something is amiss, though she maintains a **jovial tone** (“lamb”) which ensures her final realisation is all the more tragic.
- Further, her choice of words here **summarises Juliet’s different identities**: she is a **“Mistress”** - forcibly tied to the men around her - a **“lamb”** and a **“lady”** - supposedly innocent - and finally a **“bride”** - ultimately defined by her marriage.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5d/Romeo_and_Juliet_%28Act_IV%2C_scene_V%29.jpg

- **(IV.v.23-25) Nurse:** *“She’s dead, deceas’d, she’s dead; alack the day!” / “Alack the day, she’s dead, she’s dead, she’s dead”*
 - The **repetition** here both between and within Nurse’s and Lady Capulet’s dialogue **reflects their utter shock** at Juliet’s **“death”** - they have nothing to say, so can only repeat the obvious.
 - This is made **aurally clear** to the audience via the unpleasant **dental alliteration** (repetition of ‘d’) which repeatedly drums into one’s ear.
- **(IV.v.38-40) Capulet:** *“Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir; My daughter he hath wedded; I will die, / And leave him all; life, living, all is Death’s.”*
 - The **personification of Death** creates the sense that death is present on stage and **foreshadows** the many deaths that are to come.
 - Furthermore, Capulet’s lines ensure that even in **“death”**, Juliet is defined by her marriage and is **stripped of any individual identity**.
- **(IV.v.75-78) Friar:** *“O, in this love, you love your child so ill / That you run mad, seeing that she is well./ She’s not well married that lives married long, / But she’s best married that dies married young”*
 - The Friar’s words act to calm the situation but have a **deeper meaning**. He seems to be chastising the Capulets for the ill **“love”** of Juliet - perhaps pointing to her arranged marriage to Paris. And his final **couplet** applies to her marriage to Romeo - her brief affair with Romeo made her happier than a long marriage ever would.
 - **This dual meaning reflects the Friar’s duplicity in staging Juliet’s death**



- (IV.v.100-101) Peter: “Musicians, O, musicians, ‘Heart’s ease’, ‘Heart’s / ease’! O, an you will have me live, play ‘Heart’s ease.’”
 - Here, Peter asks for a happy song to placate his mournful nature, demonstrating the **paradoxes which underpin the court** - for some, happiness is seen as the natural (and perhaps inappropriate) remedy for mourning.
 - Further, the title “**Heart’s Ease**” is an important one: all characters are searching for ease in their hearts (Juliet, for instance, wants to be with Romeo), yet this is **ultimately denied**, just as the musicians refuse to play the song here.

Act 5

Summary

This scene sees the **tragic downfall** of Romeo and Juliet’s relationship. The Friar’s letter of explanation does not reach Romeo, so when he hears of Juliet’s “death” he falls into a pit of depression and decides to kill himself alongside Juliet. Romeo reaches Juliet’s tomb and **kills Paris, then kills himself**. Juliet, on waking, sees Romeo’s body and **stabs herself**. The Capulets and Montagues converge on the scene and mourn the events, which the Friar explains to them what has happened. The two families decide to **set aside their differences and honour Romeo and Juliet with statues**.

Act 5, Scene 1

Summary

Ironically, the scene opens with Romeo talking of his dream in which Juliet brought him to life, only for his messenger - Balthasar - to enter and **tell him of Juliet’s “death”**. The Friar’s message, explaining the whole affair, is undelivered.

Romeo decides to go to Juliet’s tomb and commit suicide so he can be with Juliet in death and, to this effect, he **goes to an apothecary to attain some illegal poison**. Romeo sets off for Juliet’s grave.



http://www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/sites/bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/files/styles/gallery_full/public/bfi_stills/bfi-00n-g6i.jpg?itok=lgcATrj8

Key Quotes

- **(V.i.16-17) Romeo:** *“For nothing can be ill if she [Juliet] be well” / “Then she is well, and nothing can be ill”*
 - This exchange between Romeo and Balthasar **represents the dramatic change in tone** from Romeo’s happiness to his grief. The **chiastic** nature of the two lines represents how Balthasar takes Romeo’s sentiment and inverts it, just as Romeo’s emotions are soon to be inverted from joy to sadness.
 - Further, Balthasar’s line is fragmented by a **medial caesura**, whereas Romeo’s line is not, demonstrating the former’s uncertainty and the fragmentation that will soon be transferred to Romeo (i.e. his torn emotional state on discovering Juliet’s fate)
- **(V.i.34) Romeo:** *“Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night”*
 - Romeo’s short line here epitomises the great depths of his grief - as soon as he has heard the news of Juliet’s death, he is certainly on his plan to commit suicide. The **parataxic nature** of the line (and of the soliloquy as a whole) represents this certainty.
 - This line also poses a **perverse inversion of their relationship via the pun on “lie”**, meaning **“lie in death”** but also alluding to the sexual act (**“to lie with someone”**). This amalgamation of the death bed and the marriage bed represents the unnatural and swift turn from joy to tragedy that their relationship has taken.
- **(V.i.40-41) Romeo:** *“Meagre were his looks; / Sharp misery had worn him to the bones”*
 - Romeo’s description of the apothecary contains a **plethora of macabre words (“meagre [...] misery [...] bones”)** which is not the only representative of his own depressed mental state but is **proleptic** of his death (**“bones”**). The apothecary, as the representation of all of Romeo’s negative emotions, is thus the natural place for him to visit.

Act 5, Scene 2

Summary

Friar John informs Friar Lawrence of his failure to deliver the letter to Romeo. Friar Lawrence despairs, noting how this failure could have grave consequences. He decides to **go to Juliet’s tomb** himself so that he may be with her when she awakes, and to **write again to Romeo** to tell him of the plan; he is unaware that Romeo is already on his way.



https://news.streetroots.org/sites/default/files/styles/article_image_full/public/pen-and-paper-clip-art-141121.jpg?itok=amaFSuNh



Key Quotes

- **(V.ii.14-16) Friar: “I could not send it [...] Nor get a messenger to bring it thee, / So fearful were they of infection”**
 - Friar John’s reason for his failure to deliver the letter seems wildly unusual, and this is suggestive of some **greater power working against bringing Romeo and Juliet together**. They were not fated to be together - as the incident of “**infection**” reveals - and this makes the depiction of their love all the stronger.
 - Further, the authorities’ fear of a spurious “**infection**” led to a real onset of deaths (those of Romeo, Juliet et al.); this line is thus somewhat **proleptic of these deaths** and establishes a setting of illness and misery.
- **(V.ii.24-29) Friar: “Now must I to the monument alone [...] And keep her at my cell till Romeo come - / Poor living corpse, clos’d in a dead man’s tomb!”**
 - The Friar’s final speech is full of **ominous foreshadowing**: his solitude (“**alone**”) creates a sense of isolation soon to be felt by Romeo and Juliet. His comment that Juliet must stay alive till Romeo arrives is given gruesome reality when she does stay alive until Romeo arrives, but kills herself on seeing his body.
 - This mention of Juliet “**clos’d in a dead man’s tomb**” **represents the repression of Juliet by the patriarchal society in which she lives**. All her actions (who she is to marry, how she will marry, how she will meet Romeo) are orchestrated by **patriarchal traditions**, and the Friar (perhaps unknowingly) acknowledges this here.

Act 5, Scene 3

Summary

The scene opens in the graveyard in which the **Capulet tomb** is located. Paris is the first to enter; he hears the approach of Romeo and challenges him to fight. **Paris is killed**. Romeo then enters the tomb and, thinking Juliet to be dead, **drinks his poison and dies**.

Friar Lawrence enters the scene and is present when Juliet awakes but, hearing a noise, he exits, thus leaving Juliet alone. She despairs on seeing Romeo’s body and **kills herself with his dagger**. The Capulets and Montagues converge on the scene; it transpires Lady Montague has died of grief on the exile of Romeo. After the Friar explains the tragedy, **the two families reconcile and promise to make statues to honour their fallen children**.



<https://i.pinimg.com/564x/dc/a4/0b/dca40b37692227705c1c4a37b20a2bde.jpg>



Key Quotes

- **(V.iii.12-15) Paris:** *“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”*
 - Paris’ lamentations here **highlight the connection between Juliet’s femininity and nature** (with its **connotations** of tenderness and innocence), especially with such phrases as **“Sweet flower”** to describe her. This suggests that even in **“death”**, Juliet is unable to escape **patriarchal norms**.
 - The **semantic field of natural terms** (**“flowers [...] dust and stones [...] sweet water”**) cements this connection, whilst also depicting Juliet as having returned to nature.
- **(V.iii.66-67) Romeo:** *“Stay not, be gone; live, and hereafter say / A madman’s mercy bid thee run away”*
 - The **fragmented and repetitious nature** of Romeo’s sentences represents his self-proclaimed madness.
 - The repetitious nature (**“stay not, be gone”**) of the lines also highlights Romeo’s desperation - he does not want to kill Paris, but will equally risk all for Juliet.
- **(V.iii.101-105) Romeo:** *“Shall I believe / That unsubstantial Death is amorous, / And that the lean abhorred monster keeps / Thee here in dark to be his paramour?”*
 - The **juxtaposition** between the **lexical sets** of morbid words **“Death [...] lean [...] abhorred monster”** and that of love **“amorous [...] paramour”** highlights Romeo’s confusion - he both loves Juliet and despairs of his love. The **personification** of Death perhaps is a projection of his own desire to die.
 - This conflict is continued in Romeo’s final death **“Thus with a kiss I die”**. This also represents how Romeo and Juliet’s ostensibly innocent love is ultimately fatal.
- **(V.iii.300-303) Montague:** *“There shall no figure at such rate be set / As that of true and faithful Juliet” / “As rich shall Romeo’s by his lady’s lie - / Poor sacrifices of our enmity!”*
 - This **final reconciliation** encompasses the tragic values of recognition (the Lords recognising their selfishness) and hope of a better future.
 - However, this hopeful ending is undermined by the very act of turning Romeo and Juliet into statues, which **eternally objectifies them** to serve their parents wishes; in death, as in life, neither Romeo nor Juliet attains autonomy.