

Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare Made Easy)

by William Shakespeare

Teacher's Guide

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Synopsis

Prologue

The announcer describes a lengthy feud between the rival houses of Montague and Capulet.

Act I, Scene i

Armed with swords, servants Gregory and Sampson encounter Abraham and Balthazar, who are Montague's men. Benvolio, followed by Tybalt, joins the scene with raised sword. Capulet and his wife hear the noise and enter. Capulet calls for his sword. Prince Escalus halts their pointless fighting. He sets a death penalty on the next brawler to breach the city's peace and summons Montague to court that afternoon in Old freetown. Meanwhile, Lady Montague worries about her son, Romeo. Benvolio reports that he saw Romeo an hour before dawn in a grove west of the city. Romeo, sick with love, enters shortly after nine. Benvolio is unable to relieve his unhappiness.

Act I, Scene ii

In a street in Verona, Count Paris discusses with Juliet's father his suit for marriage. Capulet hesitates to betroth his thirteen-year-old, yet rules in favor of Paris's proposal if Juliet agrees. Capulet invites Paris to a party that night and dispatches an illiterate servant to deliver invitations. The servant must stop Benvolio and Romeo to help him read his master's guest list. Benvolio decides to mask himself and crash the party. Romeo, who remains melancholy, agrees to go along to see Rosaline, who is named among the guests.

Act I, Scene iii

In the Capulet house, Juliet and her mother discuss the proposed match with Paris. Juliet is ambivalent toward marriage. Her nurse urges her to consider the proposal.

Act I, Scene iv

That night, a reluctant Romeo accompanies Benvolio and their pal Mercutio, an intelligent lad who blathers on about love and the fairy world, boring Romeo with his fantasy.

Act I, Scene v

The Capulet family hosts friends and relatives at a banquet and dance. Although Romeo belongs to the enemy clan, he receives courtesy from Capulet and stands transfixed by his host's daughter. Her hot-blooded cousin Tybalt learns Romeo's identity and spoils for a fight. Capulet intercedes and demands peace. Romeo, unaware of the danger or of Juliet's family name, falls instantly in love and kisses Juliet. Too late, the young lovers learn that they belong to opposite sides of a longstanding, bloody feud.

Act II, Prologue

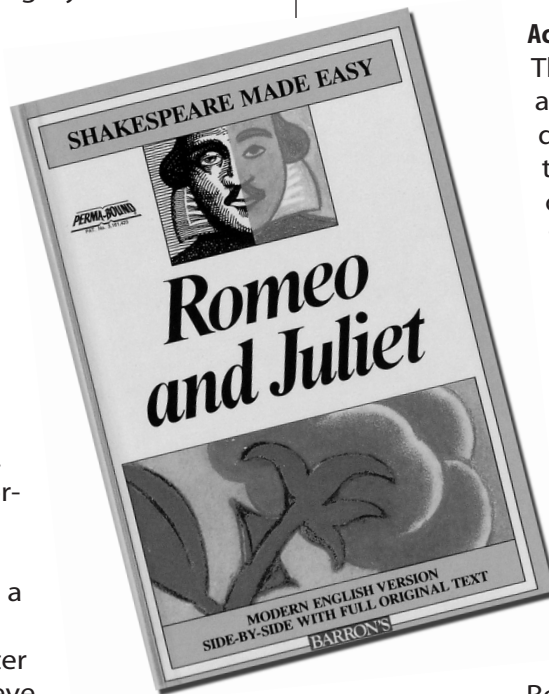
The announcer reports that Romeo no longer loves Rosaline, since he met with Juliet, who returns his love.

Act II, Scene i

In the wee hours, Romeo walks past the Capulets' walled garden and scales the wall to catch a glimpse of Juliet, leaving his mocking friends in the street.

Act II, Scene ii

Outside a window, Romeo overhears Juliet confess love for him and her dismay that they are children of warring families. Undeterred by family affairs, they agree to marry.



Act II, Scene iii

At dawn, Romeo hurries away to consult Friar Lawrence, a local priest and herbalist. The friar, who knows that Romeo once professed similar longings for Rosaline and fears that the youth is both fickle and immature, believes that the marriage of members of the two Veronese families can end their protracted feud.

Act II, Scene iv

Later that morning, Romeo wanders the city. His ebullient mood surprises Mercutio and Benvolio. The trio encounters Juliet's devoted nurse, a voluble, outspoken woman who has served Juliet from birth. Romeo divulges the wedding plans: Friar Lawrence will conduct the wedding that afternoon when Juliet comes to his cell, ostensibly to make confession. The loyal nurse warns Romeo not to dally with Juliet's affections.

Act II, Scene v

At the Capulet home later that morning, the nurse finds Juliet eagerly awaiting her in the orchard. The nurse tells her when and where to meet her love.

Act II, Scene vi

Friar Lawrence welcomes the young lovers and prepares to conduct a simple wedding.

Act III, Scene i

An hour after Juliet weds Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio carry on their usual Capulet-baiting against the feisty Tybalt. He sparks a knife fight; Romeo intercedes, placing his body between Tybalt and Mercutio. Unaware that Tybalt has struck Mercutio a mortal blow, Romeo tries to make friends with Juliet's cousin, who is now Romeo's kinsman by marriage. The fight escalates; Mercutio collapses, cursing both Capulets and Montagues. Unable to extricate himself from tangled loyalties, Romeo kills Tybalt. The outrage of the Capulets causes Prince Escalus to make good his threat against brawling. Lady Capulet demands that Romeo be executed. The prince chooses a lesser sentence: he banishes Romeo from Verona.

Act III, Scene ii

The nurse breaks the hard news. Juliet, who awaits Romeo's arrival after dark, grieves for Tybalt. She concludes that he was notoriously belligerent and therefore partially to blame. She gives the nurse a ring in token of her love for Romeo and sends her to Friar Lawrence's cell, where Romeo hides.

Act III, Scene iii

Meanwhile, Romeo weeps uncontrollably in the friar's cell as he ponders how exile will end his brief marriage to Juliet. The nurse arrives and urges Romeo to help Juliet cope with the day's events. Until a reprieve can be arranged with the prince, Friar Lawrence dispatches Romeo to Mantua before nightfall to await a message delivered by Balthazar, Romeo's servant.

Act III, Scene iv

Capulet again contemplates Paris' proposal of marriage to Juliet and settles on a wedding on Thursday, which is three days away.

Act III, Scene v

At daylight, a lark awakens the bridal couple on Tuesday morning. Romeo leaves Juliet and sets out for Mantua. Juliet's family, unaware of the conjugal visit, force her to end her grieving for Tybalt and accept Paris. The nurse favors a better match for Juliet and agrees that marriage to Paris is best. Juliet ceases to confide in her parents or her nurse, considers killing herself, and turns to Friar Lawrence as her last hope.

Act IV, Scene i

When Juliet enters Friar Lawrence's cell, she finds Paris completing wedding plans. She conceals her change of heart and says nothing about her marriage to Romeo. At Paris' departure, she confides her despair at the events that have separated her from Romeo only hours after the wedding. The friar concocts a plan utilizing a powerful herb that simulates death. Juliet, lying in a deep coma, will be buried in the family vault. Friar Lawrence will summon Romeo to rescue her from the tomb and flee with her to safety.

Act IV, Scene ii

Plans for the wedding consume the Capulets. Juliet pretends to anticipate marriage to Paris. Capulet's mood brightens; he moves up the wedding date to Wednesday and summons Paris.

Act IV, Scene iii

That night, after sending the nurse away so Juliet may pray and prepare herself for marriage, she unstops the vial and swallows the potion. Immediately, she collapses.

Act IV, Scene iv

In the morning, the Capulets send the jubilant nurse to awaken Juliet.

Act IV, Scene v

The nurse finds her beloved charge lifeless. The nurse, Juliet's parents, and Paris grieve her sudden death. Friar Lawrence urges them to deck her with rosemary and dress her for burial. He implies that the parents are suffering God's punishment. The musicians change from joyful wedding tunes to a woeful funeral dirge.

Act V, Scene i

Balthazar carries news to Romeo that Juliet is dead. Romeo, despairing of his bride, makes an illegal purchase of poison from a poor Mantuan chemist and departs for Verona to join Juliet in her tomb.

Act V, Scene ii

Friar Lawrence learns that his letter explaining Juliet's feigned death did not reach Mantua. Friar John, the messenger, was stopped outside the city, which was quarantined during an outbreak of disease. Friar Lawrence plans to write a second letter, but first hurries to free Juliet from the tomb and escort her to his cell until Romeo's return.

Act V, Scene iii

Lighted by a torch, Romeo arrives at the vault and discovers Paris decking his fiancée's tomb with flowers, but Romeo does not immediately recognize him. Paris blames him for Tybalt's murder and Juliet's supposed suicide. Romeo fatally stabs his adversary, who asks to be buried near Juliet. In the murky light, Romeo discovers the identity of the slain youth. Inside, he discovers Juliet's inert body, kisses her, drinks the poison, and slumps alongside her catafalque. Paris' servant hurries to summon the constable.

Juliet shakes off the drug's effects and awakens to find Romeo dead. Friar Lawrence arrives and tries to persuade her to flee to a nunnery before watchmen apprehend them. Voices of the approaching three guards frighten the priest away. Finding no poison left in the vial, Juliet seizes Romeo's dagger and plunges it into her chest. Both Capulets, Montague, and Prince Escalus enter the tomb and examine the corpses. Balthazar, Paris' page, and Friar Lawrence fill in the events and motivation for the three deaths. After studying the contents of Romeo's letter to his father, Prince Escalus blames the heads of each family for carrying a feud to such a bloody end and concludes that all are punished. Montague, who willingly clasps the hand of his former enemy, proposes raising statues to the star-crossed couple.

Timeline of the Action

earlier	A feud rages between the rival houses of Montague and Capulet.
13 years before	Susan dies. Her mother becomes wet-nurse for Juliet Capulet.
Sunday morning in late July	In a Verona street, Prince Escalus sets a death penalty on the next brawlers. Romeo fails to woo Rosaline. Count Paris arranges to marry Juliet.
later	Capulet dispatches an illiterate servant to deliver invitations. Benvolio and Romeo intend to crash the party. Juliet promises to examine her suitor closely at the party.
Sunday night	The Capulet family hosts friends and relatives at a banquet and dance. Tybalt learns Romeo's identity. Capulet demands peace. Romeo kisses Juliet.
before dawn	Romeo scales the wall of the Capulet orchard to glimpse Juliet. They agree to marry.
dawn on Monday	Romeo hurries away to consult with Friar Lawrence, who hopes that marriage can end the feud.
later that morning	Romeo encounters Juliet's devoted nurse, who divulges that the wedding will occur that day.
later midmorning	Friar Lawrence conducts the wedding. Tybalt sparks a knife fight with the Montagues. Mercutio dies; Romeo kills Tybalt. Escalus banishes Romeo.
later	The nurse arranges for Romeo to spend Monday night with his bride. Capulet settles on a wedding that Thursday between Juliet and Paris.
at daylight on Tuesday	Romeo leaves Juliet and sets out for Mantua.
later	Juliet's family force her to accept Paris. Friar Lawrence offers Juliet a plan to simulate her death. Capulet moves the wedding date to Wednesday.
Tuesday evening	Juliet swallows the friar's potion and collapses.

Wednesday morning	The nurse, Juliet's parents, and Paris grieve Juliet's apparent death.
meanwhile	Balthazar carries news to Romeo that Juliet is dead. Romeo buys poison and rushes back to Verona.
that evening	Friar Lawrence hurries to free Juliet from the tomb.
that night	Romeo kills Paris, drinks the poison, and dies near her burial place. Romeo's mother dies during the night.
later	Juliet kills herself with Romeo's dagger.
Thursday morning at dawn	The families and Prince Escalus examine the corpses. Montague proposes raising statues to the dead couple.

Author Sketch

William Shakespeare (ca. April 23, 1564–April 23, 1616) attended a Latin grammar school in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. At eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, eight years his senior, and fathered a daughter, Susanna, and twins, Judith and Hamnet. He moved to London at the age of 23 or 24, joined the Lord Chamberlain's company, later known as the King's Men, and remained active in theater until 1611. Much about his early adulthood is a mystery, but it is clear that he obtained a thorough knowledge of his chosen field—acting—and was well-known by 1592.

Shakespeare gained the approval of Elizabeth I and her Scottish successor, James I, both regular theater-goers. His success as an actor-playwright enabled him to invest in real estate, to build the popular Globe Theatre, and to purchase a coat of arms for his father, John Shakespeare, a glover and bailiff in Stratford. Having written and produced thirty-seven plays, a sonnet sequence, and two long poems, Shakespeare retired to a large house in Stratford. As a country gentleman, he lived out his life in harmony with his family and was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church.



Critic's Corner

Composed sometime between 1593 and 1595, *Romeo and Juliet* epitomizes the romantic side of Shakespeare's multifaceted stage plays and verse. The plot, borrowed from Arthur Brooke's romantic verse *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), passed through Italian and into French before arriving in the English canon. To adapt the popular story to the exigencies of Elizabethan drama, Shakespeare compresses the original nine months into five days in mid-July, two weeks before the heroine's fourteenth birthday on August 1:

- the Sunday morning uproar in Verona and evening soiree at the Capulet house
- the Monday wedding, death of Tybalt, and banishment of Romeo
- the leave-taking on Tuesday, as Romeo heads for Verona
- Juliet's faked death and burial
- Romeo's purchase of poison from the Mantuan apothecary
- the concluding cemetery scenes early on Thursday morning

This alteration of the actual time frame greatly enhances the emotions of jealousy, rage, love, and remorse and builds to a sweeping resolution—the cessation of a senseless family feud.

Frequent recreations of the *Romeo and Juliet* theme permeate art, dance, opera, drama, musicals, screenplays, and television productions. In 1867, Charles Gounod performed his opera *Roméo et Juliette*; Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky composed music for the play in 1869. The 1935, Sergei Prokofiev produced a score that has served numerous choreographers. The next year, a black-and-white film, starring Leslie Howard, Norma Shearer, Basil Rathbone, and John Barrymore, won four Oscar nominations. A pallid British technicolor movie in 1954 used Italian settings and starred Lawrence Harvey opposite an unknown Juliet, actress Susan Shentall. Three years later, Leonard Bernstein wrote the music for a smash Broadway hit and subsequent movie, *West Side Story*, a choreographic masterwork set in a Hispanic ghetto of New York City. The songs "Maria" and "Tonight" were bestsellers.

The most successful version both visually and emotionally, the Franco Zeffirelli *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), won an Oscar for the film's rich photography and two Oscar nominations for best picture and Zeffirelli's superb direction. Stars Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey, youthful unknowns, bring to life the love story of a pair of star-crossed teenage lovers. A pathetic mod remake, *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (1996), violated the efforts of both Bernstein and Zeffirelli with a street-smart version set in op art backdrops and featuring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes in protracted recitations that neither actor seemed to understand or appreciate.

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Shakespeare's Works

- Titus Andronicus*, ca. 1588-1594
- Henry VI, Part I*, ca. 1589-1592
- Comedy of Errors*, ca. 1580s-1594
- The Taming of the Shrew*, ca. 1589
- Richard III*, ca. 1589
- Henry VI*, ca. 1589
- King John*, 1590
- Henry VI, Part 2*, ca. 1590-1591
- Henry VI, Part 3*, ca. 1590-1591
- Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ca. 1592-1598
- Venus and Adonis*, 1593
- A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ca. 1593-1595
- Romeo and Juliet*, ca. 1593-1595
- Love's Labours Lost*, ca. 1593-1595
- The Rape of Lucrece*, 1594
- Richard II*, ca. 1595-1596
- The Merchant of Venice*, summer 1596 to summer 1598
- The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ca. 1597
- Much Ado About Nothing*, ca. 1598
- Henry V*, 1599
- Julius Caesar*, ca. early 1599
- As You Like It*, ca. 1599
- Hamlet*, ca. 1599-1600
- Twelfth Night*, ca. 1599 to 1601
- Troilus and Cressida*, ca. 1602
- Othello*, ca. 1603-1604
- King Lear*, ca. 1603-1606
- Measure for Measure*, 1604
- All's Well That Ends Well*, ca. 1604
- Macbeth*, ca. 1603-1606
- Antony and Cleopatra*, ca. 1605
- Coriolanus*, ca. 1605-1609
- Pericles*, ca. 1606-1608
- Timon of Athens*, ca. 1606-1608
- Cymbeline*, ca. 1608-1610
- The Winter's Tale*, ca. 1610-1611
- The Tempest*, ca. 1610-1611
- Henry VIII*, ca. 1612-1613
- Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ca. 1613
- Two Noble Kinsmen*, possibly written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher in 1613

General Objectives

1. To experience and read aloud from a Shakespearean tragedy
2. To identify and explain dramatic conventions, particularly chorus, aside, prologue, and soliloquy
3. To identify *Romeo and Juliet* as a tragedy
4. To envision the staging of a poignant, complicated play
5. To assess the richness of language and activity from the Middle Ages
6. To isolate and explain several types of love
7. To set the play in its social and geographical context
8. To comprehend the power of love and vengeance as motivators
9. To evaluate constraints on females in a patriarchal society
10. To discuss the role of religion and law in the settlement of domestic problems

Specific Objectives

1. To determine why Capulet overrules both wife and daughter and rushes Juliet into marriage
2. To analyze the importance of Mercutio's fantasies to the plot
3. To explain the mixup in messages to and from Mantua
4. To account for a senseless, murderous feud in Verona
5. To discuss Shakespeare's concept of woman's place in society
6. To analyze the apothecary's decision to sell poison to Romeo and Friar Lawrence's dispensing of a powerful drug to Juliet as well as the nurse's application of wormwood to her breast
7. To summarize the importance of arguments to the plot
8. To contrast Romeo, the Capulets, Paris, and the nurse in their love for Juliet
9. To list and explain circumstances that lead to tragedy, especially the plague that quarantines Mantuans
10. To determine why two young lovers must die before a feud can end

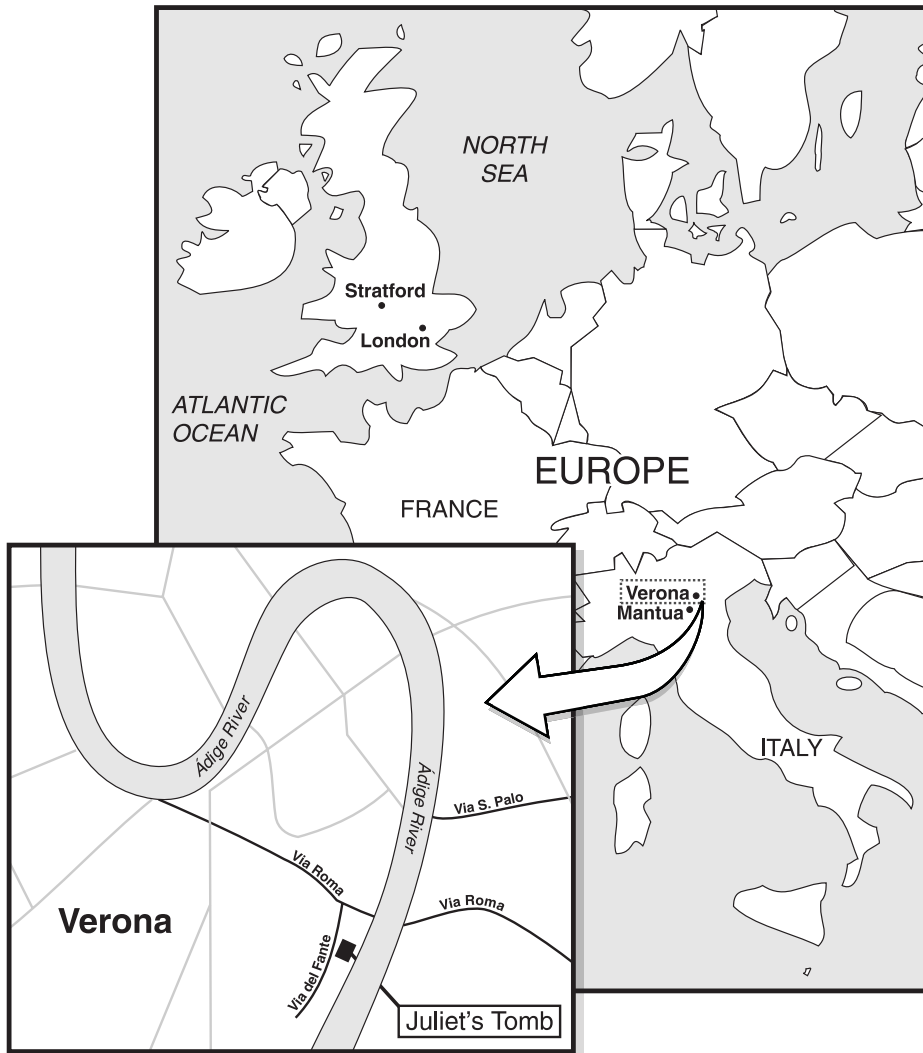
Related Reading

Sandra Caruso, *Actor's Book of Improvisation*
Lois Duncan, *Killing Mr. Griffin*
Ann Head, *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*
Joseph Papp, *Shakespeare Alive!*
Stefan Rudnicki, *Actor's Book of Classical Monologues* and
Actor's Book of Monologues for Women
Michael Schulman, *Actor's Scenebook*
William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing, and As You Like It*
Irving Shulman, *West Side Story*
Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema, *Bard of Avon*
James A. Steffenson, *Moving Parts: Monologues from Contemporary Plays* and *Great Scenes from the World Theater, Volumes I and II*

The Importance of Setting

The milieu of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is loosely based on some quite virulent quarrels and blood feuds between great Italian families at the end of the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance. Because these houses ruled petty fiefdoms like royalty, they were constantly intermarrying, acquiring and losing land, readying for combat, and requiting real and imagined slights against their proud lineages. The playwright chose Verona to tie the story to Italy's colorful past, but no real feud serves as source of the plot. The name of Prince Escalus is genuine—a corruption of a real Veronese ruling house, della Scala, who maintained power in the early Renaissance.

Although fictional, the plot moves over intriguing terrain to enhance viewer interest. From the initial fight in the piazza or town center of Verona, the action ranges over an aristocrat's home and orchard, a young girl's bedroom and balcony, a monk's spare quarters decked with drying herbs, and a street in the quarantined city of Mantua, where the populace suffers an epidemic. The most imaginative aspect of the play on stage and in film is the above-the-ground burial vault in which the tragedy concludes. The choice is typical of Elizabethan drama, which relied on the bizarre and the romantic for atmosphere. Amid moldering skeletons atop catafalques lies Juliet's still-warm body dressed in her best. After Romeo subdues Paris at the entrance, his smoky torch lights the way among other deceased members of the Capulet family to his beloved's resting place, where they both commit suicide.



Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of William Shakespeare's style, present the following terms and applications to the play:

chiaroscuro: a deliberate contrast of light and dark to highlight movement or intensify a particular figure or setting, for instance, alternating patterns of moonlight and darkness in the orchard courtship scene and in the Capulet tomb. The playwright intensifies the play of light against dark to denote the two sides of human behavior. In the opening scene, the overt anger of warring families has become such a burden to Verona's civic peace that the prince is willing to condemn to death anyone who pursues vengeance. Against the long-standing quarrel, the compelling attraction of two young innocents overrides anger to establish a hopeful marriage.

However, the playwright

reminds the audience from the beginning that such idealism is not capable of subduing the dark side of the feud. In the final scene, the projected gold statues are a weak effort to blot out a renewed siege that has cost the lives of Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo's mother, Romeo, and Juliet.

round character: a realistic being who possesses a complex or multifaceted array of traits. The description fits Romeo, who enters the play in a daze out of infatuation with Rosaline. Friar Lawrence recognizes the inconstancy of his young counselee and turns his new love into a positive tool to end Verona's debilitating feud. The depth of Romeo's love establishes a believable character who moves beyond the stereotype of hot-blooded swain to a sensible husband who is willing to end the feud by welcoming Tybalt as kinsman. Romeo is a resourceful youth who, with the help of Friar Lawrence, intends to alter the prince's judgment

The murky vault is necessary to the plot, for Juliet must not be cremated or buried in the ground if she is to revive and reunite with her husband. Also, by gathering the principles at the burial spot of Tybalt, Romeo, and Juliet in the falling action, Shakespeare heightens the serious conclusion by contrasting it with earlier upbeat scenes—a lively ball and banquet, young people falling in love and courting at a balcony overlooking the Capulet orchard, tense consultations with Friar Lawrence, and Romeo's tender parting from Juliet's bed. The horrific backdrop lacks the graveyard imagery of Hamlet by displaying bodies above ground in the type of vault that only the rich could afford. Yet, for all their money, neither family can restore the youth and vigor of their treasured children. The projected gold statues will adorn Verona as a reminder of anger, violence, and wasted lives.

and establish a lasting marriage with an enemy's daughter. In Mantua, Romeo manipulates the apothecary and returns on pain of death to Verona to grieve at Juliet's tomb. His loss is so great that death is the only solace.

tragedy: a serious drama in which the main character, usually a prominent, noble, or royal person, falls or dies as a result of some human failing, which the Greeks called by the archery term *hamartia*, a missing of the mark. In the case of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, human failing applies to most of the characters, particularly the warring families. Lady Capulet is so vengeful that she presses Prince Escalus for a death sentence against Romeo. Capulet values his position as head of family and demands that his daughter marry Paris, leaving her no negotiating room to express her relationship to Romeo. The fickle nurse loses interest in the youthful marriage and presses Juliet to accept Paris, a handsome prospect. Friar Lawrence risks the lives of the young lovers to bring peace to Verona. The main characters, who rush into marriage without realizing the danger of their alliance, suffer fearful consequences. The beauty of their pure romance remains intact as the two families gather at the vault for Prince Escalus' reminder that "all are punished."

Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about Verona, Renaissance Italy, *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare, and the new Globe Theatre, consult these sources:

Sheila Hale and Mark Smith, *Verona*
Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her*, a history of women's lives from 1500-1800
J. R. Mulryne, *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt*
Wolfgang Riehle, *Shakespeare, Plautus, and the Humanist Tradition*
Paul Robert Walker, *The Italian Renaissance*

Also, consult this website for additional background data on the Globe Theatre:
http://naples.net/ent_th/globe.htm.

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* should include these aspects:

Themes

- enmity
- deception
- intrigue
- longing
- young love
- separation
- flight
- micommunication
- martyrdom
- reconciliation

Motifs

- civic peace disrupted by feuding families
- puppy love giving place to mature love
- friends who try to understand a maturing comrade
- the devotion of a nurse and parents
- harsh laws that force people to desperate measures
- a failed journey

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the tragedy. Next to each term from the original play is the simplified wording from the opposite page. Explain the meaning of each pair. Act, scene, line, and page numbers are provided so that you can re-read the passages from which the item is taken.

1. from ancient grudge [a long-standing vendetta] (Prologue, pp. 20-21)
(*The announcer sets the tone by introducing the feud between the Capulets and Montagues, the background emotion that complicates a simple love story and turns it into tragedy.*)
2. civil brawls [brawling citizens] (I, i, 84, pp. 30-31)
(*Prince Escalus accentuates his judgement and wisdom by pointing out the number of previous incidents that have shattered peace in Verona. To assure the settlement of the feud on pain of death, the Prince orders Capulet to come immediately to discuss the seriousness of his judgment. Montague is ordered to*

come to Freetown in the afternoon to hear more about the matter. Obviously, Prince Escalus does not believe that the two men are ready to sit in the same council chamber to reason together about the feud.)

3. starved with her severity [saving herself] (I, i, 214, pp. 38-39)
(Romeo, who is confounded by Rosaline's choice to remain chaste and to die a virgin, makes a noble statement about physical beauty. In his view, beauty must be shared, i. e. consummated, to be fully realized, for part of Rosaline's loveliness lies in the generations who might inherit her features. But, like a petulant child, he adds, "She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair, to merit bliss by making me despair." His lofty argument for shared beauty collapses in the conclusion that Romeo, her lusty would-be lover, is the one who suffers.)
4. Prodigious birth of love [How disastrous that first love] (I, v, 138, pp. 76-77)
(As with Romeo's frustrated love for Rosaline, Juliet also realizes that love can run into "prodigious" difficulties. Shakespeare spotlights her realization by rhyming all four lines of this segment of dialogue, ll. 136-139, into a pointed quatrain. Critics wonder how a family so entangled in hate could not be aware of each other's identity in a town the size of Verona. Perhaps Capulet has kept her immured and watched to protect her from danger or from ravishment by local young men, particularly the sons of enemies.)
5. Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow . . . [Same] (II, ii, 184, pp. 96-97)
(One of Shakespeare's more memorable couplets, the lines illustrate how iambics fit the English language [Good night] and how simple diction can combine in an alliterated paradox [sweet sorrow] and prefigure the coming reunion at the tomb, the first meeting of the newlyweds since the morning following their wedding night.)
6. Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here!
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? [Holy Saint Francis! Now here's a change! Have you so soon forsaken Rosaline?]
(II, iii, 67-19, pp. 102-103)
(Friar Lawrence, who hears Romeo's confession, is relieved that the new problem is another girl and that Rosaline has fallen from first place in Romeo's heart. By his outburst, Friar Lawrence, who gives the impression that he follows Saint Francis, may have been among Italy's large order of Franciscans, who numbered over 5,000 by the early thirteenth century and spread northward to encompass western Europe. As such, Friar Lawrence would have to observe stringent vows of poverty and humility and might share Francis of Assisi's love of animals.)

7. Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting. [Tybalt, I've reason to be friends with you, and that restrains my anger at such a greeting.] (III, i, 58-60, pp. 134-135)
(Married to Juliet that same day, Romeo quickly realizes the significance of marital alliance with a Capulet. Tybalt, of course, is a hot-blooded fighter who loves to spar with Montagues and has yet to learn that Romeo is now his cousin by marriage. The ambivalence in Romeo produces a three-way confusion: Mercutio does not understand Romeo's attempt to stop the fight, Romeo has not had time to announce his marriage to a Capulet, and Tybalt, whom Mercutio insults, pursues vengeance. Mercutio dies in a fit of anger and dismay that Tybalt escapes without a scratch. Romeo is then honor-bound to avenge his friend. Note that all these mental calculations occur in a matter of seconds during a street brawl.)
8. Tell me not, Friar, that thou hearest of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it.
[Don't tell me, Friar, that you've heard of this, unless you also tell me how I can stop it.]
(IV, i, 51-52, pp. 194-195)
(After concealing her woe during a polite exchange with her fiancé, Juliet embraces privacy with Friar Lawrence. When the door is shut on Paris, she pours out dismay that her family expects her to marry Paris on Thursday. Juliet is so distraught at her father's stern order to marry Paris that she carries a knife to end her torment and insists, "Give me some present counsel, or, behold, 'twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife shall play the umpire" [Give me some advice. Otherwise, take note! This lethal knife will arbitrate between my desperate situation and myself.]
9. Your looks are pale and wild and do import
Some misadventure. [You look pale and distraught. Misfortune is indicated.] (V, i, 28-29, pp. 226-227)
(Balthazar, Romeo's insensitive and/or ignorant servant, reports the death of Juliet without preparing his master for so great a sorrow. The rapid, fearful change in Romeo's appearance at once terrifies Balthazar and presages more tragedy. The bluntness of the message unhinges Romeo, who seeks poison to end his misery. Shakespeare greatly enhances this change by taking his hero from love-struck teenager to lover to husband to murderer to exile in a few days' time. Now banished in Mantua, Romeo has neither friend, relative, nor spiritual counselor to turn to for advice or comfort at multiple traumas. In Shakespeare's reckoning, Romeo is pushed beyond rationality by the extent of personal losses.)

10. As I did sleep under this yew tree here,
I dreamt my master and another fought,
And that my master slew him. [As I slept
under this yew tree here, I dreamt my master
and someone else had a fight, and that my
master killed him.] (V, iii, 137-139, pp. 244-
245)

(Balthazar's tenuous position as Romeo's servant leaves him on slippery ground. Because Romeo has ordered him to leave on pain of death, like Romeo, Balthazar is banished. Unable to protect his master, he hovers on the edge of the action and frets that he cannot intercede and keep Romeo from greater harm.)

Yew trees are the conventional border of churchyards and cemeteries. In medieval times, outlaws could claim sanctuary from civil arrest by taking up residence on sanctified ground. In acknowledgement of the Church's place in rescuing desperate people from life-or-death situations, prelates planted yew because of its straight limbs, suitable for making arrows.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the play.

Questions 1 - 5 Literal Level

1. What does the opening scene of Act I reveal about the situation in Verona at the time of the play?
*(Opening on insults and a common Italian gesture of defiance, the biting of the thumb, armed male servants of the Capulet and Montague household quarrel and snipe at each other in the town square on a Sunday morning in mid-July. Benvolio and Tybalt escalate the fight with drawn swords. The Veronese partisans yell encouragement for each side. Against the advice of their wives, both Capulet and Montague, who are too old for such undignified scrapping, rush to take part. Prince Escalus, who enters with his retinue, speaks a harsh monologue to all citizens, calling for the end of this third civil uproar, which destroys the city's peace. Future brawlers, he decrees, shall suffer torture and death. Escalus requests that each head of household meet with him in private, Capulet first, then Montague in the afternoon at Freetown.
At the lull that follows the fighting, Montague questions his nephew Benvolio and receives a biased description of Tybalt's part in the fight ("In the instant came the fiery Tybalt with his sword prepared.") Lady Montague cares little for the details and worries more that her son Romeo may join the fray. Benvolio*

replies that Romeo is engaged in an internal war: an hour before sunrise, he saw Romeo slip into the woods to avoid crossing paths with Benvolio, his cousin. Romeo's father adds that Romeo has been given to bouts of sleeplessness, retreating into solitude, weeping, and sighing.)

2. What do Lady Capulet and the nurse discuss about Juliet?

(The third scene of Act I displays a similar parental concern for Juliet, who, at thirteen, is young for wooing. Lady Capulet at first prefers privacy for her mother-to-daughter talk, but relents and includes the nurse, who reveals some useful trivia. She reminds her mistress that, since Susan's death, the nurse has held Juliet as dear as her departed daughter, who was born about July 31, Juliet's birthday. The nurse prattles on about weaning Juliet at age two, when the Capulets were at Mantua, about the time of the earthquake. The nurse adds personal observations and blatantly coarse commentary on her husband's laughing at "Jule's" fall, a tumble that cut her forehead.

At last, Lady Capulet quiets the nurse and returns to important matters: Is Juliet interested in courtship and marriage? Juliet seems to have no leaning toward matrimony, but keeps an open mind. The nurse encourages her to consider the honor of marrying so handsome a man as Count Paris and makes a coarse remark about pregnancy. Lady Capulet insists on an answer. Juliet promises to look him over at the ball and report to her mother.)

3. How do Romeo and Juliet meet?

(At a traditional ball given by the Capulets that Sunday night, relatives and friends, responding to a last-minute invitation, gather to dance and dine. Capulet sends a servant with a list of guests and an oral invitation. Because the servant is illiterate, he stops Romeo in the street and asks for help in deciphering his instructions. Romeo spies Rosaline's name on the sheet and decides to accompany the other maskers in hopes of gazing at the girl he loves, who happens to be a niece of Capulet.

At the ball, Rosaline fades from memory because Romeo and Juliet have eyes only for each other. Unknown by name, they touch and kiss. The nurse tells each the identity of the other. Immediately, the young couple realize the seriousness of a love that runs counter to the antipathies of a family feud. Romeo is so smitten that he remains in the street outside Juliet's house and, before dawn on Monday morning, climbs the fence alongside the orchard to be near her room. She speaks her love to him from the balcony and agrees to send word at nine in the morning and to meet him for an immediate marriage.)

4. How does Romeo become bridegroom and exile from Verona on the same day?

(Hurrying to Friar Lawrence, his spiritual adviser, Romeo divulges his love for Juliet. Friar Lawrence recognizes Romeo's immaturity in switching loyalties from Rosaline to Juliet and is uncertain that so rapid a marriage is wise. Romeo counters that Juliet returns love, but Rosaline did not. For Verona's sake, Friar Lawrence accepts Romeo's reasoning and takes the chance of a faulty mating in hopes of halting the longstanding feud between the Capulets and Montagues.)

The nurse, accompanied by Peter, meets Romeo at nine o'clock, as planned, and returns to Juliet with a report. To cover Juliet's unexplained absence, the nurse sends her to Friar Lawrence's cell for confession. Friar Lawrence speaks his worries about the possibility of violence. In acknowledgement of the attraction between the two lovers, he determines to marry them quickly because he does not trust the two alone. The hasty nuptials end Act II.

By chance, in Act III, Romeo crosses paths with Tybalt in Verona just as Benvolio and Mercutio are spoiling for a fight. Romeo's ambivalence toward the duel disconcerts Mercutio, who, lacking word of the recent marriage of his friend to a Capulet, doubts Romeo's loyalty to the Montague cause. To avenge Mercutio's unforeseen death, Romeo kills his new cousin by marriage, but the deed falls after Mercutio curses both their houses. Too late, Romeo realizes the ramifications of his actions and cries, "O, I am Fortune's fool!"

When called to account by the Prince, Benvolio excuses the fight by explaining how Mercutio and Tybalt were killed. The Prince, ignoring a retelling of Romeo's attempt to make peace, is influenced by the wails of Lady Capulet for her cousin and her cries for justice. On the spot, the Prince exiles Romeo and promises that he will be killed on sight if he remains in Verona. On a personal note, the Prince adds that he was kin to Mercutio and has reason to regret the continued blood feud that robs the city of peace. To retain quiet in Verona, the Prince declares himself deaf to pleas and excuses. On that grim note, the Capulets carry Tybalt's body away.)

5. How do the two lovers happen to die in the Capulet monument?

(When Capulet forces Juliet to accept a marriage proposal to Paris and to plan to arrive at St. Peter's Church on Wednesday for the wedding, she turns to Friar Lawrence for help. He proposes to give her a drug that will make her sleep so soundly that her parents will find her comatose and think her dead. While guaranteeing to remove her from the burial vault when she awakens, he intends to reunite her immediately with Romeo. The complicated plot requires Friar Lawrence to dispatch an immediate message to Mantua by Friar John, a fellow Franciscan. Meanwhile, Romeo's servant Balthasar outpaces Friar John and reports to his master that Juliet is dead and buried.

Living alone in Mantua and facing exile without his beloved wife so soon after their marriage, Romeo falls into worsening despair when he learns of her death. In a brash manipulation of an apothecary's poverty, he offers the hungry man 40 ducats for an illegal purchase of poison. By the time that Romeo travels back to Verona, the pre-dawn sky is dark. He slays Paris, who mourns and places flowers at Juliet's grave, and forces his way into the above-ground vault. In sight of his beloved, he drains the vial and collapses dead beside her catafalque.

In token of his word, Friar Lawrence arrives before Juliet awakens. She responds to the Friar's gentle call, but turns from him to grieve that Romeo has killed himself. Friar Lawrence urges her to accompany him to a convent and accept the hospitality of "holy nuns." Juliet refuses to leave her husband's corpse. She kisses the warm lips in hopes of sharing a drop of the poison he drank. Denied death by the method that killed him, she stabs herself with his dagger. The watchmen are perplexed by the sight of two warm corpses, one of whom was supposed to have died the previous day.)

6. What does Prince Escalus mean by "All are punished"?

(The cost in lives has reached alarming proportions. Because the strife and deaths concern Verona's citizens, everyone loses when the feud drags on and embroils more people in its list of victims. Prince Escalus, who is related to the Montagues, loses his kinsman Mercutio as well as Romeo and Romeo's mother, who dies of grief when her son is exiled. The Capulets, who have grieved for Tybalt, now add Count Paris to their mourning and recognize that Juliet did not die of natural causes, but has deceived them and died by her own hand, which clutches Romeo's dagger.

In a fit of rage after reading Romeo's explanatory letter to Montague, Prince Escalus speaks directly to the feuding lords of Verona. He blames himself for laxness in overlooking their protracted fight and concludes that "All are punished." In a veiled comment, he states that, before the matter is concluded, others will be punished and some pardoned. As though he had the power over the sun, he predicts that the day will be overcast with grief.)

7. How does Friar Lawrence influence the play?

(As spiritual adviser and confessor, Friar Lawrence serves as an authority figure to townspeople, who come to him for counseling and forgiveness of sins, for religious occasions such as funerals and marriages, and for herbs, which he gathers fresh in surrounding fields. His friendship with Romeo runs deep. Friar Lawrence does not hesitate to upbraid the boy for questionable logic and presumed illicit behavior with Rosaline and to wonder how he can so quickly fall in love again. The false link in the priest's reasoning is the temptation to use Romeo's hasty betrothal to Juliet as a means of ending the feud between their families.

At the tomb, Friar Lawrence complains of stumbling on "old feet," a suggestion of the muddle his aging wits have made of affairs by encouraging Juliet to defy her father and to fake death. He quickly assesses the death of Paris and Romeo's suicide in the tomb before arousing Juliet from the effects of the drug. He tries to force her to leave and take shelter with nuns, but, terrified of being caught at the scene of a duel and possibly being accused as an accomplice or grave robber, he rushes away muttering that he dare not remain.

The situation looks doubtful for Friar Lawrence after the third watchman returns him to the scene to be questioned by Prince Escalus. Weeping and sighing, the Friar faces suspicion for carrying spade and mattock from the scene of the crime. The prince quiets the outraged parents and questions Friar Lawrence, who claims that old age will soon end his life. In clear reportage, he narrates the events of the past three days: the couple were wed, Romeo banished, and Juliet pushed to the brink of suicide. To rescue her from a second marriage, the Friar made a sleeping potion that simulates death by causing the user to sleep deeply and resemble a corpse. The intervention of the Friar's message by Friar John resulted in Romeo's despair, the fatal duel with Paris, and a double suicide.)

Across the Curriculum

Math and Economics

1. Compute how far Romeo travels from Verona to Mantua. According to the text, who probably journeyed faster, Romeo, Balthazar, or Friar John? Give reasons for your choice.
2. Use historical data to determine the height, width, and depth of the Globe Theater. Include figures on how many people could stand or sit to view a play. Contrast these figures to copies of the Globe, particularly the Elizabethan stage in the Folger Library, Washington, D. C.
3. Using ordinary models, demonstrate the meaning of ell.

Social Studies

1. Compose a list of Shakespeare's plays and long poems and their settings, as with *The Tempest* in Bermuda, *Othello* in Venice, *As You Like It* in Arden Forest, *Macbeth* in Scotland and England, and *Hamlet* in Denmark and Germany and at sea. Note whether the places are real or imaginary, as with the homes of the Montagues and Capulets and St. Peter's

Church in Verona. Locate real settings on a map along with the names of the plays. Place a star on Stratford, England, Shakespeare's birthplace.

2. Propose alternatives to the death sentence on peacebreakers in Verona, for example, public service or some other light penalty that will encourage an end to feuding, yet will not sacrifice young offenders. Give reasons for your choices.
3. Research the political, economic, and religious implications of the beginning of the Stuart line, which came about because Elizabeth I had no children or English heirs. How did English government change during Shakespeare's career? Why did he have reason to miss Elizabeth I and to fear the northern pretender to the throne, Mary, Queen of Scots?
4. What change in law stopped parents from forcing their children to accept arranged marriages? Why does Capulet force Juliet to accept Paris' proposal of marriage? What benefit does he derive from forcibly betrothing a thirteen-year-old girl, his only child?
5. Why was the post of wetnurse beneficial to wealthy families and their humbler servants? How could a woman like the nurse profit from life in a comfortable house among cultivated people? How does Juliet benefit from having so sympathetic a nurse?

Psychology

1. Discuss the psychological effect of a string of violent deaths and suicides on Verona and its two warring families. Why does Lady Montague's death receive so little attention in the play? Why does Paris' suit for Juliet seem unimportant in the last scene?
2. Using *Romeo and Juliet* as models, create an extended definition of star-crossed, the term Shakespeare uses to introduce the ill-fated love story. Explain why their marriage is doomed from the start. How does Friar Lawrence's meddling worsen the situation? Why does he hasten from the Capulet tomb as the nightwatch approaches?

3. Two characters—Susan and Rosaline—are mentioned, but take no part in the action. How does Romeo describe Rosaline? How does Rosaline contrast with Juliet? What does Susan's death suggest about the nurse's love for Juliet?

Religion

1. Explain the purpose of confession. How often do Catholics confess their sins to a priest? What penalties do they pay? Is there any sin that can't be forgiven? Why is Friar Lawrence in need of punishment? What sins does he commit? Determine whether Friar John is equally at fault.
2. Discuss Juliet's loyalty to her marriage vows. What religious dilemma arises from her decision to kill herself with her husband's dagger? How did the Church punish suicides during the Middle Ages?
3. How does the Church calendar influence Shakespeare's method of naming dates? When is Juliet's birthday? When do Easter and Pentecost occur? Define the term movable feast.
4. Pantomime the wedding ceremony at Friar Lawrence's cell.

Language Arts

1. Choose a series of lines from the original play and the simplified version to illustrate the playwright's skill with poetry, as with "I fear too early for my mind misgives some consequence yet hanging in the star shall bitterly begin his fearful date with this night's revels"/"I have a premonition that something written in the stars, but not yet revealed, will begin its course with tonight's celebrations." Post the paired phrases on the bulletin board and lead a discussion of their significance. If you have questions about such archaic words as an if, fain, flee, saucy, and nice, which have changed or fallen out of common use since the English Renaissance, refer to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
2. List and explain mythological, literary, biblical, religious, musical, and historical allusions in the play.

Art and Music

1. Use desktop publishing or other artistic forms to create a handbill that will catch the eye of prospective audiences. Choose an illustration that intrigues the illiterate reader to see the tragedy and learn how it ends. Emphasize action and contrast in your drawing, for example by depicting Romeo's fight with Tybalt, the nurse discovering Juliet's inert body, or Juliet pleading with her father to postpone marriage plans.
2. Select music to delineate the contrast between wooing, fighting, traveling, discussing sad news, receiving advice from Friar Lawrence, dancing, determining a punishment for feuding on Verona's streets, and other somber, disturbing, or fearful subjects.
3. Use calligraphy or computer fonts to create an attractive invitation to the Capulets' party. Address the note to one of the people named on the guest list.

Cinema

1. Make a list of dramatic scenes from the novel that would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts, particularly Juliet's drugged sleep, Romeo's fight with Paris, Mercutio's death, Juliet and Romeo's behavior at the ball, the placement of the ladder, Friar Lawrence's herb collection, conflict in a murky tomb, and Tybalt's fight with the Montagues.
2. Describe movie and television versions of Shakespeare's plays that capture the sense of time, place, fashion, and historical events along with his poetry and character studies, notably *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. What does each film warn about unrequited love, mismatched couples, discontent, and wedlock?

Science and Health

1. Name drugs that suspend the body's functions, for example, curare and mandrake or mandragora. How do they benefit treatment? What is the purpose of an antidote?
2. Give an oral report on loss and guilt as precursors to despair, suicide, and death. Discuss

modern methods of treating Lady Montague, Romeo, and Juliet, as with mood elevating drugs, group counseling, hypnosis, or shock therapy.

3. List, define, and illustrate references to nature, especially the nightingale, plants, Capulet's garden, and lark, the bird that heralds day-break. What flowers might Paris have brought to Juliet's tomb?
4. Account for Shakespeare's emphasis on light and dark and the phases of the moon. Which characters die in daylight and which at night?

Student Involvement Activities

1. Sketch the layout of the last scene. Emphasize the placement of corpses and the arrival of Prince Escalus and the Capulets. Why might Montague stand apart from the others? Complete a list of historically accurate weapons, burial shrouds, tools, lights, vial for poison, and costumes for the cast.
2. Write a report on Shakespeare's method of presenting tragedy. Include the use of different stage levels and trapdoors, dancers, musical instruments, and special effects, such as moonrise, cannon fire, ghostly apparitions, and thunder. Comment on his use of young men to play the role of female characters and a children's company to play elves and fairies. Explain the purpose of the flag on top of the theater. Discuss how the producer would compensate for lack of curtains, sound systems, and sophisticated lighting devices.
3. Write a diary entry describing a presentation of *Romeo and Juliet* as seen from the point of view of an orange-seller, stage flutist or drummer, groundling, actor, rival playwright, or visitor from Italy. Stress the parts of the play that would impress a poorly educated but thoroughly experienced playgoer, especially sword fights, preparations for a banquet, and dancing.
4. Compose a scene in which Lady Capulet and her husband discuss their losses, including the deaths of their other children. Mention

the failed hope of a noble son-in-law and grandchildren and losses to Verona, including Lady Montague, Paris, Mercutio, and Tybalt. Include comment on the nurse's change of duties and her grief for Juliet.

5. Write a paragraph in which you summarize Shakespeare's idea of the nature and purpose of tragedy. Contrast his methods with those used in modern film or television tragedy.
6. Compose a short congratulatory telegram to Shakespeare from Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, James I, Richard Burbage, Thomas Middleton, Queen Elizabeth I, or Christopher Marlowe upon the success of this tragedy. Contrast the action to other popular works of the day, for example, a tragedy of blood or domestic comedy.
7. Write a note to Queen Elizabeth I in which you invite her to the opening night of *Romeo and Juliet*. Narrate the highlights of the plot, especially the nobility and justice of Prince Escalus.
8. Compose an extended definition of drama in which you explain the following aspects: character, setting, plot, theme, tone, mood, aside, soliloquy, monologue, climax, chorus or prologue, dilemma, compressed time, literary foils, comic relief, motivation, stereotype, and denouement.
9. Apply the term "coming to knowledge" to the final scene. Explain what Prince Escalus means by "All are punished." How is Escalus hurt by violence and vengeance in Verona? Why does Friar Lawrence appear untouched by guilt, even though his meddling causes much of the double tragedy?
10. Locate historical evidence that audiences from Shakespeare's time until the present have enjoyed *Romeo and Juliet*, whether as stage play, ballet, tableau, or movie. Name actors and dancers who have ennobled the roles of Romeo, Mercutio, and Juliet.

Alternate Assessment

1. List in chronological order and describe significant events connected with the play. Mention Rosaline's decision to remain a virgin, the shift of the wedding date from Thursday to Wednesday, Susan's death, the nurse's first and second meetings with Romeo, Mercutio's curse, Lady Capulet's suggestion of Paris for a husband, Friar Lawrence's lecture on Romeo's fickleness, Friar John's return from Mantua, the nightwatch's summoning of Prince Escalus to the Capulet tomb, Lady Montague's death, and Juliet's awakening from the drug.
2. Make a list of scenes from the play that express strong attitudes toward treachery, kinship, self-doubt, loss, grief, love, vengeance, chastity, deception, peace, mercy, and guilt. Indicate what you think is Shakespeare's personal philosophy on each subject.
3. Compose a brief definition of tragedy as it applies to *Romeo and Juliet*. What changes in the story would turn it into a comedy, fantasy, or romance?
4. Summarize scenes that depict conflict, particularly the quarantine in Mantua, Friar Lawrence's fear that Romeo has rejected Rosaline so quickly, Juliet's first contemplation of suicide, Capulet's lecture to Tybalt at the ball, Lady Capulet's scolding of her talkative nurse, Capulet's order that Juliet accept Paris' proposal, Mercutio's teasing of Romeo, and Romeo and Juliet's balcony scene.

Teacher's Notes

Vocabulary

Select original words from the list below to replace synonyms in the simplified speech of Romeo that follows:

acute	desperate	grotesque	offense	tortoiseshell
apothecary	drawn	harbor	scheming	various
bushy	earthenware	herbs	tattered	wretch

Well, Juliet, I shall lie with you tonight. Let's see how. How quickly fearful (1) _____ men hide (2) _____ sneaky (3) _____ thoughts! There's a druggist (4) _____ I remember who lives around here. I noticed him recently, dressed in worn (5) _____ clothes, with thick (6) _____ eyebrows, gathering plants (7) _____. He looked tired (8) _____; harsh (9) _____ poverty had worn him down. In his shabby shop he had a turtleshell(10) _____ hanging, a stuffed alligator, and different (11) _____ skins of hideous (12) _____ fishes. On his shelves, thinly scattered to make some sort of show, were a few empty boxes, green pottery (13) _____ jars, old leather bottles and stale seeds, bits of string, and old rose-scented blocks. Noting this poverty, I said to myself, "If ever a man needed a poison, the sale of which is a capital crime (14) _____ in Mantua, here lives a miserable sufferer (15) _____ who'd sell it to him."

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Fill-in (20 points)

Complete each of the following lines with a place. Choose from the list below. You will have answers left over when you finish.

apothecary shop, ballroom, Capulet's house, Capulet tomb, Freetown, Friar Lawrence's cell, herb garden, Juliet's bedroom, Mantua, Montague's house, nurse's chamber, orchard, St. Peter's Church, Verona, bride's window, yew tree

1. Prince Escalus commands that Capulet and Montague meet separately with him at _____.
2. The poverty-stricken apothecary claims that the law in _____ forbids him to sell poison.
3. At a ball in _____, Tybalt spies his enemy and threatens to begin a fight.
4. At _____, Romeo and Juliet are married in secret.
5. Capulet first proclaims that the wedding will take place Thursday at _____.
6. Tybalt lies buried in the _____.
7. Friar John looks for a "barefoot brother" to visit the sick in _____.
8. Paris scatters flowers outside the _____.
9. Balthazar sleeps under the _____ while Romeo embraces his bride.
10. In the _____ of Capulet's house, Romeo overhears Juliet's confession of love.

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. To prove that she is a Capulet, Juliet sends Romeo a ring and has the nurse beg his pardon for her birth name.
- _____ 2. Romeo promises to meet Benvolio and Mercutio at nine o'clock in Verona's main square.
- _____ 3. To help Capulet's illiterate servant, Romeo reads aloud names from the guest list, which includes Rosaline.
- _____ 4. Late on the night they meet, Romeo and Juliet agree to marry.
- _____ 5. Friar Lawrence scolds Romeo for moving too quickly from one romance to another.
- _____ 6. Prince Escalus promises to torture and kill the next person to commit murder on the streets of Verona.
- _____ 7. The apothecary accepts 40 ducats for poison because he is poor and hungry.
- _____ 8. Romeo and Juliet lie in the same tomb that houses Lady Montague's corpse.
- _____ 9. Montague proposes raising a gold statue to his daughter-in-law; Capulet replies that he will place a statue of Romeo alongside it.
- _____ 10. Paris insists that the wedding be moved from Thursday to Wednesday.

Part III: Essay Questions (30 points)

In a paragraph, discuss the significance of the following passages.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Hence will I to my ghostly sire's close cell,
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. | 3. Hold, take this letter. Early in the morning
See thou deliver it to my lord and father. |
| 2. Tybalt being slain so late,
It may be thought we held him carelessly,
Being our kinsman, if we revel much.
Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,
And there an end. | 4. O churl. Drunk all, and left no friendly drop
To help me after! I will kiss thy lips. |

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part IV: Quotations (30 points)

Name the speaker of each line below.

_____ 1. His name is Romeo, and a Montague, the only son of your great enemy.
[His name's Romeo, and he's a Montague. He's the only son of your great enemy.]

_____ 2. On pain of torture, from those bloody hands throw your mistempered
weapons to the ground. [On pain of torture, drop those misused weapons from your bloodstained hands.]

_____ 3. I must upfill this osier cage of ours with baleful weeds and precious-
juiced flowers. [I must fill our basket with deadly weeds and flowers with precious juices.]

_____ 4. How now, a conduit, girl? What, still in tears? Evermore showering? [Are
you a rainspout? What, still crying? One continuous shower?]

_____ 5. Her body sleeps in Capels' monument, and her immortal part with
angels lives. [Her body is asleep in the Capulet family tomb, and her soul is with the angels.]

_____ 6. Musicians, O musicians, "Heart's ease," "Heart's ease." O, an you will have
me live, play "Heart's ease." [Musicians, oh, musicians! Play me "Heart's Ease"! "Heart's Ease"! If you want me
to keep on going, play "Heart's Ease."]

_____ 7. I will raise her statue in pure gold, that whiles Verona by that name is
known, there shall no figure at such rate be set as that of true and faithful Juliet. [I'll have a statue made of
her in solid gold, so that while there is ever a Verona, no one shall surpass in value and in reputation the
true and faithful Juliet.]

_____ 8. I could not send it —here it is again—nor get a messenger to bring it
thee, so fearful were they of infection. [I couldn't send it—here it is back again—nor get a messenger to
deliver it to you. They were so afraid of infection.]

_____ 9. Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives that I mean to
make bold withal. [Good King of Cats, I just want one of your nine lives!]

_____ 10. O, where is Romeo? Saw you him today? Right glad I am he was not at
this fray. [Where is Romeo? Have you seen him today? I'm very glad he wasn't involved in this fight.]

_____ 11. She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes in shape no bigger than an
agate stone on the forefinger of an alderman. [She's the fairy queen who brings to life men's fantasies.
She's no bigger than a gemstone on the index finger of an alderman.]

_____ 12. But passion lends them power, time means, to meet, tempering extrem-
ities with extreme sweet. [Passion gives them the motive, and time the means, to meet: their hardships
make encounters all the sweeter.]

_____ 13. Hold, daughter, I do spy a kind of hope, which craves as desperate an
execution as that is desperate which we would prevent. [I can see a sort of hope. It demands as dangerous
a course of action as the matter is dangerous that we want to prevent.]

_____ 14. Go tell the Prince. Run to the Capulets. Raise up the Montagues. Some
others search. [Go and tell the prince. Run to the Capulets. Awaken the Montagues. The rest, search
around.]

_____ 15. Stay, fellow. I can read. [Hold on. I can read.]

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Identification (20 points)

Name the persons speaking these lines:

_____ 1. O, happy dagger. This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die. [Oh, lucky dagger [This is your sheath. Rust there, and let me die.]

_____ 2. All are punished. [Same]

_____ 3. We are undone, lady, we are undone.

Alack the day, he's gone, he's killed, he's dead. [We're ruined, my lady, we're ruined! Alas, he's gone! He's killed! He's dead!]

_____ 4. 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 walls of the orchard are high and hard to climb. Considering who you are, this place is death to you if any of my relatives find you here.]

_____ 5. I am not here. This is not Romeo. He's some other where. [I'm not with you. This isn't Romeo here—he's somewhere else.]

_____ 6. You are a saucy boy. Is't so indeed? This trick may chance to scathe you. [You're a cheeky fellow. So it's shameful, is it? This will do you no good, mark my words.]

_____ 7. Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight. [Alas, my lord, my wife died last night.]

_____ 8. Is Rosaline, that you didst love so dear, so soon forsaken? [Have you so soon forsaken Rosaline, whom you loved so dearly?]

_____ 9. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. [No, it's not as deep as a well or as wide as a church door, but it's enough. I'll do.]

_____ 10. Evermore weeping for your cousin's death? What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears? [Still weeping for your cousin's death? What, will you wash him from his grave with your tears?]

Part II: Essay Questions (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain the roles of Friar John, the apothecary, the nurse, and Tybalt.
2. Discuss evidence that Romeo and Juliet realize the danger of their mutual love.
3. Discuss the swift sequence of events that occurs on Monday.
4. Justify Juliet's refusal to marry Paris.

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Completion (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase to complete each of the following quotations.

1. Queen _____ hath been with you. She is the fairy's midwife. [Queen ___ has been with you! She's the fairy queen.]
2. Uncle, this is a _____, our foe: A villain that is hither come in spite to scorn at our solemnity this night. [Uncle, this is a ____, one of our foes: a villain who's come here in hatred, to mock at our celebration tonight!]
3. The citizens are up, and _____ slain! Stand not amazed. The Prince will doom thee to death if thou art taken. [People are coming! ___'s dead! Don't stand there staring. The prince will have your life if you're caught!]
4. Spak'st thou of _____? How is it with her? Doth not she think me an old murderer? [Did you speak of ___? How is she? Does she think I'm a habitual murderer?]
5. Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed. Prepare her, wife, against this _____ day. [Go to Juliet before you go to bed. Prepare her, wife, with this ___ day in mind.]
6. Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds, but fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next to go with Paris to _____'s Church. [I'll have none of your "thanks," thank you, none of your "prouds"! Just get your fine self ready for next Thursday, to go with Paris to ___'s Church.]
7. Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone. Let not the _____ lie with thee in thy chamber. [Tomorrow night make sure you sleep alone. Don't let the ___ lie with you in your room.]
8. And I, for winking at your discords too, have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are _____. [And I have lost two relatives through turning a blind eye to your quarrels. We all are ____.]
9. Go waken Juliet. Go and trim her up. I'll go and chat with _____. [Go and awaken Juliet. Go and dress her up. I'll chat with ____.]
10. This night you shall behold him at our feast; read o'er the volume of young _____' face, and find delight writ there with beauty's pen. [You'll see him tonight at our feast. Scan _____'s face as if it were a book. Attractiveness is the central theme.]

Part IV: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. How much does Romeo pay for poison?
- _____ 2. Who is quarantined while visiting the sick?
- _____ 3. Who keeps watch while Romeo breaks into the monument?
- _____ 4. Who scares Friar Lawrence away from the scene of a double suicide?
- _____ 5. What two punishments does Prince Escalus announce for breakers of the city peace?
- _____ 6. What does Juliet send as a token of love?
- _____ 7. Who vows to die a virgin?
- _____ 8. Who identifies Juliet's mother for Romeo?
- _____ 9. Whom does the nurse say would be thirteen if she were still alive?
- _____ 10. At what time does Juliet promise to send word to Romeo?
- _____ 11. How does the nurse get Romeo into Juliet's room?
- _____ 12. What bird announces dawn?
- _____ 13. Who orders that Juliet be decked with rosemary [funeral flowers]?
- _____ 14. Where does Juliet meet Paris and conduct a stilted
- _____ 15. What does Romeo leave for his father?

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. desperate | 9. acute |
| 2. harbor | 10. tortoiseshell |
| 3. scheming | 11. various |
| 4. apothecary | 12. grotesque |
| 5. tattered | 13. earthenware |
| 6. bushy | 14. offense |
| 7. herbs | 15. wretch |
| 8. drawn | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Settings (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Freetown | 6. Capulet tomb |
| 2. Mantua | 7. Mantua |
| 3. Capulet's house | 8. Capulet tomb |
| 4. Friar Lawrence's cell | 9. yew tree |
| 5. St. Peter's Church | 10. orchard |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part III: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

Part IV: Quotations (30 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. nurse | 9. Mercutio |
| 2. Prince Escalus | 10. Lady Montague |
| 3. Friar Lawrence | 11. Mercutio |
| 4. Capulet | 12. Chorus |
| 5. Balthazar | 13. Friar Lawrence |
| 6. Peter | 14. watch |
| 7. Montague | 15. Romeo |
| 8. Friar John | |

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Juliet | 6. Capulet |
| 2. Prince Escalus | 7. Montague |
| 3. nurse | 8. Friar Lawrence |
| 4. Juliet | 9. Mercutio |
| 5. Romeo | 10. Lady Capulet |

Part II: Essay (30 points)

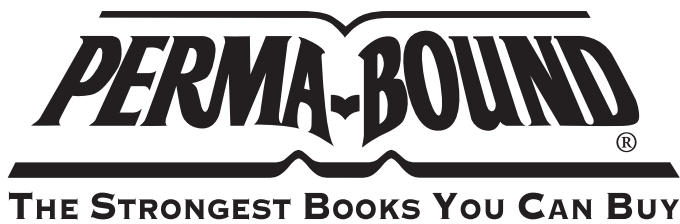
Answers will vary.

Part III: Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Mab | 6. Saint Peter |
| 2. Montague | 7. nurse |
| 3. Tybalt | 8. punished |
| 4. Juliet | 9. Paris |
| 5. wedding | 10. Paris |

Part IV: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 40 ducats | 9. Susan |
| 2. Friar John | 10. nine |
| 3. Balthazar | 11. rope ladder |
| 4. nightwatch | 12. lark |
| 5. torture, death | 13. Friar Lawrence |
| 6. ring | 14. Friar Lawrence's cell |
| 7. Rosaline | 15. letter |
| 8. nurse | |



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