

## Connect to the Literature

### 1. What Do You Think?

What were your thoughts about Lord Capulet's behavior toward Juliet?

### Comprehension Check

- In what way is Romeo accidentally responsible for Mercutio's death?
- What is Romeo's punishment for killing Tybalt?
- Why is Lord Capulet so angry with Juliet?

## Think Critically

2. Which event in this act do you think causes the most problems for Romeo and Juliet, and why?
3. How well do you think Romeo handles difficult circumstances?

THINK ABOUT

- his behavior to Tybalt before and after Mercutio's death
- his behavior in Friar Laurence's cell
- his state of mind when he parts from Juliet

4. Describe Juliet's situation at the end of this act.

THINK ABOUT

- her mixed feelings of hate and love when she learns of Tybalt's death
- the future of her marriage with Romeo
- changes in her relationship with her parents
- the Nurse's advice

5. Compare and contrast the behavior of the Nurse and Friar Laurence in Act Three. Which of the two would you trust more if you were Romeo or Juliet? Why?

### 6. ACTIVE READING READING SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Review carefully the graphic you have been filling out in your **READER'S NOTEBOOK**. Look at the events that occur in Act Three. Which one of those events do you consider to be the **climax**, or turning point, of the play? Explain your answer.

## Extend Interpretations

7. **What If?** If you were the Prince, would you have banished Romeo? If so, why? If not, what would you have done to punish him?
8. **Connect to Life** What messages might the outcome of events in Act Three, Scene 1, convey to those who resort to violence to resolve conflicts?

## Literary Analysis

**ALLUSION** An **allusion** is a brief reference, within a work, to something outside the work that the audience or reader is expected to know. Shakespeare's plays, for example, often contain allusions to historical and current events, ancient Greek and Roman mythology, and the Bible. Line 20 from Act Three, Scene 5, alludes to Cynthia, another name for Diana, Roman goddess of the moon. Cynthia was often depicted with a crescent moon on her forehead (*reflex* here means "reflection"):

*'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow*

This allusion has a somewhat chilling, distancing effect, which anticipates the separation that Romeo and Juliet are facing at this point in the play.

**Activity** Find another allusion in Act Three, and explain what it means. Why do you think Shakespeare includes the allusion?

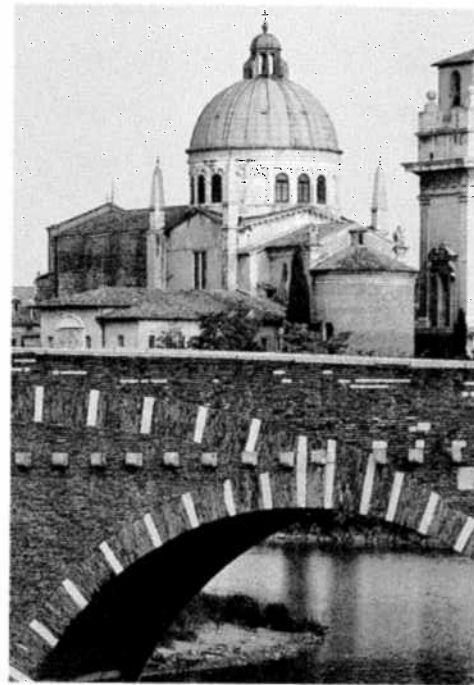
Shakespeare's plays have themselves become a source of allusions. For example, what do you think people today mean when they call someone "a regular Romeo"?

**REVIEW IRONY** **Irony** exists when there is a contrast between what is expected and what actually occurs. **Situational irony** occurs when a character or the reader expects one thing to happen but something else actually happens. **Dramatic irony** occurs when the reader or viewer knows something that a character does not know. Identify at least three examples of irony in Act Three.

# ACT *Four*

## SCENE 1 *Friar Laurence's cell.*

When Juliet arrives at Friar Laurence's cell she is upset to find Paris there making arrangements for their wedding. When Paris leaves, the panicked Juliet tells the Friar that if he has no solution to her problem, she will kill herself. The Friar explains his plan. Juliet will drink a potion he has made from his herbs that will put her in a deathlike coma. When she wakes up two days later in the family tomb, Romeo will be waiting for her, and they will escape to Mantua together.



Act Four, Scene 1. Verona

[Enter Friar Laurence and Paris.]

**Friar Laurence.** On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

**Paris.** My father Capulet will have it so,  
And I am nothing slow to slack his haste.

5 **Friar Laurence.** You say you do not know the lady's mind.

Uneven is the course; I like it not.

**Paris.** Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,

And therefore have I little talked of love;

10 For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.

Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous

That she do give her sorrow so much sway,

And in his wisdom hastes our marriage

To stop the inundation of her tears,

15 Which, too much minded by herself alone,

May be put from her by society.

Now do you know the reason of this haste.

**Friar Laurence.** [Aside.] I would I knew not why it should be slowed.—

20 Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.

**3–4 My . . . haste:** Capulet is eager to have the wedding on Thursday and so am I.

**5–7 You say . . . not:** You don't know how Juliet feels about this. It's a difficult (**uneven**) plan, and I don't like it. What the Friar's real reason for wanting to slow down the wedding preparations?

**8–17** According to Paris, what is Capulet's reason for wanting Juliet to marry so quickly?



[Enter Juliet.]

**Paris.** Happily met, my lady and my wife!

**Juliet.** That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

**Paris.** That may be must be, love, on Thursday next.

**Juliet.** What must be shall be.

25 **Friar Laurence.** That's a certain text.

**Paris.** Come you to make confession to this father?

**Juliet.** To answer that, I should confess to you.

**Paris.** Do not deny to him that you love me.

**Juliet.** I will confess to you that I love him.

30 **Paris.** So will ye, I am sure, that you love me.

**Juliet.** If I do so, it will be of more price,  
Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

**Paris.** Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.

**Juliet.** The tears have got small victory by that,  
35 For it was bad enough before their spite.

**Paris.** Thou wrongst it more than tears with that  
report.

**Juliet.** That is no slander, sir, which is a truth;  
And what I spake, I spake it to my face.

40 **Paris.** Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it.

**Juliet.** It may be so, for it is not mine own.  
Are you at leisure, holy father, now,  
Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

**Friar Laurence.** My leisure serves me, pensive  
45 daughter, now.

My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

**Paris.** God shield I should disturb devotion!  
Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye.  
Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss.

[Exit.]

50 **Juliet.** O, shut the door! and when thou hast done so,  
Come weep with me—past hope, past cure, past  
help!

**Friar Laurence.** Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief;  
It strains me past the compass of my wits.  
55 I hear thou must, and nothing may prorogue it,  
On Thursday next be married to this County.

**22–32** As in the last scene of Act Three, Juliet chooses her words carefully to avoid lying and to avoid telling her secret. Whom does him refer to in line 29?

**34–35 The tears . . . spite:** The tears haven't ruined my face: it wasn't all that beautiful before they did their damage.

**40** Paris says he owns Juliet's face (since she will soon marry him). Insulting her face, he says, insults him, its owner.

**46** We must ask you to leave.

**54–55 compass:** limit. **prorogue:** postpone.



**Juliet.** Tell me not, friar, that thou hearst of this,  
 Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it.  
 If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,  
 60 Do thou but call my resolution wise  
 And with this knife I'll help it presently.  
 God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;  
 And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo's sealed,  
 Shall be the label to another deed,  
 65 Or my true heart with treacherous revolt  
 Turn to another, this shall slay them both.  
 Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time,  
 Give me some present counsel; or, behold,  
 'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife  
 70 Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that  
 Which the commission of thy years and art  
 Could to no issue of true honor bring.  
 Be not so long to speak. I long to die  
 If what thou speakst not of remedy.

75 **Friar Laurence.** Hold, daughter, I do spy a kind  
 of hope,  
 Which craves as desperate an execution  
 As that is desperate which we would prevent.  
 If, rather than to marry County Paris,  
 80 Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,  
 Then is it likely thou wilt undertake  
 A thing like death to chide away this shame,  
 That copes with death himself to scape from it;  
 And, if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy.

85 **Juliet.** O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,  
 From off the battlements of yonder tower,  
 Or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk  
 Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears,  
 Or shut me nightly in a charnel house,  
 90 O'ercovered quite with dead men's rattling bones,  
 With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;  
 Or bid me go into a new-made grave  
 And hide me with a dead man in his shroud—  
 Things that, to hear them told, have made me  
 95 tremble—  
 And I will do it without fear or doubt,  
 To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

**Friar Laurence.** Hold, then. Go home, be merry, give  
 consent

**59–62 If . . . hands:** If you can't help me, at least tell me that my plan (**resolution**) is right.

**64–74** Before I sign another wedding agreement (**deed**), I will use this knife to kill myself. If you, with your years of experience (**long-experienced time**), can't help me, I'll end my sufferings (**extremes**) and solve the problem myself.

**79–84** If you are desperate enough to kill yourself, then you'll try the desperate solution I have in mind.

**85–97** Juliet replies that she will do anything. What does Juliet say she would rather face than marry Paris? **charnel house:** a storehouse for bones from old graves; **reekly shanks:** stinking bones; **chapless:** without jaws. The description in lines 89–93 comes closer to Juliet's future than she knows.

**98–130** The Friar explains his desperate plan to Juliet.



Act Four, Scene 1. Juliet reaches for the potion that will make her appear to be dead. (Zeffirelli, 1968)

100 To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow.  
 2 Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone:  
 Let not the nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.  
 Take thou this vial, being then in bed,  
 5 And this distilled liquor drink thou off;  
 105 When presently through all thy veins shall run  
 A cold and drowsy humor; for no pulse  
 Shall keep his native progress, but surcease;  
 No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest;  
 The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade  
 110 To paly ashes, thy eyes' windows fall  
 Like death when he shuts up the day of life;  
 Each part, deprived of supple government,  
 Shall, stiff and stark and cold, appear like death;  
 And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death  
 115 Thou shalt continue two-and-forty hours,  
 4 And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.  
 Now, when the bridegroom in the morning comes  
 To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead.  
 7 Then, as the manner of our country is,  
 120 In thy best robes uncovered on the bier  
 Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault

**103 vial:** small bottle.

**106 humor:** liquid.

**107–116** Your pulse will stop (**surcease**), and you will turn cold, pale, and stiff, as if you were dead. This condition will last for forty-two hours.

**117–122** What will happen when Paris comes to wake Juliet?



Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.  
 In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,  
 Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;  
 125 And hither shall he come; and he and I  
 Will watch thy waking, and that very night  
 Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.  
 And this shall free thee from this present shame,  
 If no inconstant toy nor womanish fear  
 130 Abate thy valor in the acting it.

**124 drift:** plan.

**129–130 inconstant toy:** foolish whim.  
**Abate thy valor:** weaken your courage.

**Juliet.** Give me, give me! O, tell me not of fear!

**Friar Laurence.** Hold! Get you gone, be strong and  
 prosperous

In this resolve. I'll send a friar with speed  
 135 To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

**Juliet.** Love give me strength! and strength shall help  
 afford.

Farewell, dear father.

[*Exeunt.*]



## SCENE 2 *Capulet's house.*

*Capulet is making plans for the wedding on Thursday. Juliet arrives and apologizes to him, saying that she will marry Paris. Capulet is so relieved that he reschedules the wedding for the next day, Wednesday.*

[*Enter Capulet, Lady Capulet, Nurse, and Servingmen.*]

**Capulet.** So many guests invite as here are writ.

[*Exit a Servingman.*]

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.

**Servingman.** You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if  
 they can lick their fingers.

5 **Capulet.** How canst thou try them so?

**Servingman.** Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick  
 his own fingers. Therefore he that cannot lick his  
 fingers goes not with me.

**Capulet.** Go, begone.

[*Exit Servingman.*]

**1–8** Capulet is having a cheerful conversation with his servants about the wedding preparations. One servant assures him that he will test (**try**) each cook he hires by making the cook taste his own food (**lick his own fingers**).



10 We shall be much unfurnished for this time.  
What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

**Nurse.** Ay, forsooth.

**Capulet.** Well, he may chance to do some good on her.  
A peevish self-willed harlotry it is.

[Enter Juliet.]

15 **Nurse.** See where she comes from shrift with merry  
look.

**Capulet.** How now, my headstrong? Where have you  
been gadding?

**Juliet.** Where I have learnt me to repent the sin  
20 Of disobedient opposition  
To you and your behests, and am enjoined  
By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here  
To beg your pardon. Pardon, I beseech you!  
Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

25 **Capulet.** Send for the County. Go tell him of this.  
I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning.

**Juliet.** I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell  
And gave him what becomed love I might,  
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

30 **Capulet.** Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.  
This is as't should be. Let me see the County.  
Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.  
Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,  
All our whole city is much bound to him.

35 **Juliet.** Nurse, will you go with me into my closet  
To help me sort such needful ornaments  
As you think fit to furnish me tomorrow?

**Lady Capulet.** No, not till Thursday. There is time  
enough.

40 **Capulet.** Go, nurse, go with her. We'll to church  
tomorrow.

[Exeunt Juliet and Nurse.]

**Lady Capulet.** We shall be short in our provision.  
'Tis now near night.

**Capulet.** Tush, I will stir about,  
45 And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.  
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her.

**10 unfurnished:** unprepared.

**14** A silly, stubborn girl she is. What does calling Juliet "it" suggest about Capulet's attitude toward her?

**15 shrift:** confession.

**17–18** How are you, my stubborn (**headstrong**) daughter? Where have you been wandering around (**gadding**)?

**19–23** **Where I . . . pardon:** where I have learned to regret disobeying your orders (**behests**). Friar Laurence has ordered (**enjoined**) me to bow before you and ask you to forgive me.

**25–26** **knot knit up:** wedding, from the expression "tying the knot." Capulet declares that the wedding will be the next day, Wednesday, instead of Thursday. What does moving the wedding up by one day do to Friar Laurence's plan?

**33–34** What is ironic about Capulet's praise of Friar Laurence?

**35** **closet:** bedroom.

**38–44** Lady Capulet urges her husband to wait until Thursday as originally planned. She needs time to get food (**provision**) ready for the wedding party.

**45–51** Capulet is so set on Wednesday that he promises to make the arrangements himself.



I'll not to bed tonight; let me alone.  
 I'll play the housewife for this once. What, ho!  
 They are all forth; well, I will walk myself  
 50 To County Paris, to prepare him up  
 Against tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light,  
 Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed.

[*Exeunt.*]



**SCENE 3** *Juliet's bedroom.*

*Juliet sends her mother away and prepares to take the drug the Friar has given her. She is confused and frightened but finally puts the vial to her lips and drinks.*

[*Enter Juliet and Nurse.*]

**Juliet.** Ay, those attires are best; but, gentle nurse,  
 I pray thee leave me to myself tonight;  
 For I have need of many orisons  
 To move the heavens to smile upon my state,  
 5 Which, well thou knowest, is cross and full of sin.

**3–5 orisons:** prayers. Why is Juliet's upcoming marriage "cross and full of sin"?

[*Enter Lady Capulet.*]

**Lady Capulet.** What, are you busy, ho? Need you my help?

**Juliet.** No madam; we have culled such necessities  
 As are behooveful for our state tomorrow.  
 10 So please you, let me now be left alone,  
 And let the nurse this night sit up with you;  
 For I am sure you have your hands full all  
 In this so sudden business.

**8–9 we have . . . tomorrow:** We have picked out (**culled**) everything appropriate for tomorrow.

**Lady Capulet.** Good night.  
 15 Get thee to bed and rest, for thou hast need.

[*Exeunt Lady Capulet and Nurse.*]

**Juliet.** Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.  
 I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins  
 That almost freezes up the heat of life.  
 I'll call them back again to comfort me.  
 20 Nurse!—What should she do here?  
 My dismal scene I needs must act alone.  
 Come, vial.

**16–25 farewell . . . there:** Juliet wonders when she'll see her mother and nurse again. She starts to call back the Nurse but realizes she must be alone to drink the potion. She keeps her knife near her in case the potion doesn't work.



—What if this mixture do not work at all?  
 Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?

25 No, no! This shall forbid it. Lie thou there.

[Lays down a dagger.]

—What if it be a poison which the friar  
 —Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,  
 Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored  
 Because he married me before to Romeo?

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

For he hath still been tried a holy man.

How if, when I am laid into the tomb,

—I wake before the time that Romeo  
 Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point!

35 —Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,

—To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?

Or, if I live, is it not very like

—The horrible conceit of death and night,

40 Together with the terror of the place—

As in a vault, an ancient receptacle

—Where for this many hundred years the bones  
 Of all my buried ancestors are packed;

—Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,

45 Lies fest'ring in his shroud; where, as they say,

At some hours in the night spirits resort—

Alack, alack, is it not like that I,

—So early waking—what with loathsome smells,

—And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,

50 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad—

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

Environed with all these hideous fears,

—And madly play with my forefather's joints,

And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,

55 —And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone

As with a club dash out my desp'rate brains?

O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost

Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body

—Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!

60 Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

[She drinks and falls upon her bed within the curtains.]

**26–31** Why does Juliet think the Friar might have given her poison?

**32–37** In these lines what fear does Juliet express?

**38–45** Next Juliet fears the vision (**conceit**) she might have on waking in the family tomb and seeing the rotting body of Tybalt.

**46–56** She fears that the smells together with sounds of ghosts screaming might make her lose her mind. **Mandrake** root was thought to look like the human form and, when pulled from the ground, to scream and drive people mad.

**57–60** Juliet thinks she sees Tybalt's ghost searching for Romeo. She cries to the ghost to stop (**stay**) and, with Romeo's name on her lips, quickly drinks the potion.



**SCENE 4** *Capulet's house.*

*It is now the next morning, nearly time for the wedding. The household is happy and excited as everyone makes final preparations.*

[Enter Lady Capulet and Nurse.]

**Lady Capulet.** Hold, take these keys and fetch more spices, nurse.

**Nurse.** They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.

[Enter Capulet.]

**Capulet.** Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock hath  
5 crowed,

The curfew bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.  
Look to the baked meat, good Angelica;  
Spare not for cost.

**Nurse.** Go, you cot-quean, go,

10 Get you to bed! Faith, you'll be sick tomorrow  
For this night's watching.

**Capulet.** No, not a whit. What, I have watched ere now  
All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

**Lady Capulet.** Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your  
15 time;

But I will watch you from such watching now.

[Exeunt Lady Capulet and Nurse.]

**Capulet.** A jealous hood, a jealous hood!

[Enter three or four Servants, with spits and logs and  
baskets.]

Now, fellow,

What is there?

20 **First Servant.** Things for the cook, sir; but I know not  
what.

**Capulet.** Make haste, make haste. [Exit Servant.] Sirrah,  
fetch drier logs.

Call Peter; he will show thee where they are.

25 **Second Servant.** I have a head, sir, that will find out  
logs

And never trouble Peter for the matter.

**3 pastry:** the room where baking is done

**4–6** Capulet tells everyone to wake up  
(**stir**).

**7–8** In his happy mood he even calls the  
Nurse by her name, Angelica. He tells her  
to attend to the meat and to spend any  
amount of money necessary.

**9 cot-quean:** The Nurse playfully calls  
Capulet a "cottage queen," or a  
housewife. This is a joke about his doing  
women's work (arranging the party).

**12–13** I've stayed up all night for less  
important things and never gotten sick.

**14–17** Lady and Lord Capulet joke about  
his being a woman chaser (**mouse-hunt**)  
as a young man. He jokes about her  
jealousy (**jealous hood**).



**Capulet.** Mass, and well said, merry whoreson, ha!  
Thou shalt be loggerhead. [*Exit Servant.*] Good faith,  
'tis day.

The County will be here with music straight,  
For so he said he would. [*Music within.*] I hear him  
near.

Nurse! Wife! What, ho! What, nurse, I say!

[*Reenter Nurse.*]

Go waken Juliet; go and trim her up.  
I'll go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,  
Make haste! The bridegroom he is come already:  
Make haste, I say.

[*Exeunt.*]

**28–31** The joking between Capulet and his servants includes the mild oath **Mass**, short for “by the Mass,” and **loggerhead**, a word for a stupid person and a pun, since the servant is searching for drier logs. **straight**: right away.

### SCENE 5 *Juliet's bedroom.*

*The joyous preparations suddenly change into plans for a funeral when the Nurse discovers Juliet on her bed, apparently dead. Lord and Lady Capulet, Paris, and the Nurse are overcome with grief. Friar Laurence tries to comfort them and instructs them to bring Juliet's body to the Capulet family tomb. The scene abruptly switches to humor, in a foolish conversation between the servant Peter and the musicians hired to play at the wedding.*

[*Enter Nurse.*]

**Nurse.** Mistress! what, mistress! Juliet! Fast, I warrant  
her, she.

Why, lamb! why, lady! Fie, you slugabed!

Why, love, I say! madam! sweetheart! Why, bride!

What, not a word? You take your pennyworths now,  
Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,  
The County Paris hath set up his rest

That you shall rest but little. God forgive me,  
Marry and amen, how sound is she asleep!

I needs must wake her. Madam, madam, madam!

Aye, let the County take you in your bed,  
He'll fright you up, i' faith. Will it not be?

[*Opens the curtains.*]

What, dressed and in your clothes and down again?  
I must needs wake you. Lady! lady! lady!

**1–12** The Nurse chatters as she bustles around the room arranging things. She calls Juliet a **slugabed**, or sleepyhead, who is trying to get her rest now, since after the wedding, Paris won't let her get much sleep. When Juliet doesn't answer, the Nurse opens the curtains that enclose the bed.

15 Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!  
 O well-a-day that ever I was born!  
 Some aqua vitae, ho! My lord! my lady!

[Enter Lady Capulet.]

**Lady Capulet.** What noise is here?

**Nurse.** O lamentable day!

20 **Lady Capulet.** What is the matter?

**Nurse.** Look, look! O heavy day!

**Lady Capulet.** O me, O me! My child, my only life!  
 Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!  
 Help! help! Call help.

[Enter Capulet.]

25 **Capulet.** For shame, bring Juliet forth; her lord is  
 come.

**Nurse.** She's dead, deceased; she's dead! Alack the day!

**Lady Capulet.** Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead,  
 she's dead!

30 **Capulet.** Ha! let me see her. Out alas! she's cold,  
 Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;  
 Life and these lips have long been separated.  
 Death lies on her like an untimely frost  
 Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

35 **Nurse.** O lamentable day!

**Lady Capulet.** O woeful time!

**Capulet.** Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me  
 wail,

Ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.

[Enter Friar Laurence and Paris, with Musicians.]

40 **Friar Laurence.** Come, is the bride ready to go to  
 church?

**Capulet.** Ready to go, but never to return.

O son, the night before thy wedding day  
 Hath death lain with thy wife. See, there she lies,  
 45 Flower as she was, deflowered by him.  
 Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;  
 My daughter he hath wedded. I will die  
 And leave him all. Life, living, all is Death's.

**Paris.** Have I thought long to see this morning's face,  
 50 And doth it give me such a sight as this?

**17 aqua vitae:** an alcoholic drink.

**19 lamentable:** filled with grief;  
 mournful.

**33–34 Death . . . field:** What simile do  
 Capulet use to describe what has  
 happened to Juliet?

**48 Life . . . Death's:** Life, the living, an  
 everything else belongs to Death.



**Lady Capulet.** Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful  
day!

Most miserable hour that e'er time saw  
In lasting labor of his pilgrimage!

55 But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,  
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,  
And cruel Death hath caught it from my sight!

**Nurse.** O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!

Most lamentable day, most woeful day

60 That ever, ever I did yet behold!  
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!  
Never was seen so black a day as this.  
O woeful day! O woeful day!

**Paris.** Beguiled, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!

65 Most detestable Death, by thee beguiled,  
By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown!  
O love! O life! not life, but love in death!

**Capulet.** Despised, distressed, hated, martyred, killed!

Uncomfortable time, why camest thou now

70 To murder, murder our solemnity?  
O child! O child! my soul, and not my child!  
Dead art thou, dead! alack, my child is dead,  
And with my child my joys are buried!

**Friar Laurence.** Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure  
lives not

In these confusions. Heaven and yourself  
Had part in this fair maid! now heaven hath all,  
And all the better is it for the maid.

Your part in her you could not keep from death,  
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.

80 The most you sought was her promotion,  
For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced;  
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced  
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?

85 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.

Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary

90 On this fair corse, and, as the custom is,  
In all her best array bear her to church;

**53–57** This is the most miserable hour that time ever saw in its long journey. I had only one child to make me happy, and Death has taken (**caught**) her from me.

**64 Beguiled:** tricked.

**69–70 why . . . solemnity:** Why did Death have to come to murder our celebration?

**74–88** The Friar comforts the family. He says that the cure for disaster (**confusion**) cannot be found in cries of grief. Juliet's family and heaven once shared her; now heaven has all of her. All the family ever wanted was the best for her; now she's in heaven—what could be better than that? It is best to die young, when the soul is still pure, without sin.

**89–93** Do what is customary. Put rosemary, an herb, on her corpse (**corse**), and take her, in her finest clothes (**best array**), to church. Though it's natural to cry, common sense tells us we should rejoice for the dead.



For though fond nature bids us all lament,  
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

**94 ordained festival:** intended for the wedding.

**98 sullen dirges:** sad, mournful tunes.

**105–106 The heavens . . . will:** The fates (**heavens**) frown on you for some wrong you have done. Don't tempt them by refusing to accept their will (Juliet's death).

**113–158** After the tragedy of Juliet's "death," Shakespeare injects a light and witty conversation between Peter and the musicians. Peter asks them to play "Heart's Ease," a popular song of the time and a **dump**, a sad song. They refuse, and insults and puns are traded. Peter says that instead of money he'll give them a jeering speech (**gleek**), and he insults them by calling them minstrels. In return they call him a servant. Then both make puns using notes of the singing scale, re and fa.

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

**Friar Laurence.** Sir, go you in; and, madam, go with  
him;

And go, Sir Paris. Every one prepare  
To follow this fair corse unto her grave.

105 The heavens do lower upon you for some ill;  
Move them no more by crossing their high will.

[*Exeunt* Capulet, Lady Capulet, Paris, and Friar.]

**First Musician.** Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be  
gone.

**Nurse.** Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up,

110 For well you know this is a pitiful case.

[*Exit.*]

**Second Musician.** Aye, by my troth, the case may be  
amended.

[*Enter* Peter.]

**Peter.** Musicians, oh, musicians, "Heart's ease, heart's  
ease." Oh, an you will have me live, play "Heart's  
115 ease."

**First Musician.** Why "Heart's ease"?

**Peter.** Oh, musicians, because my heart itself plays "My  
heart is full of woe." Oh, play me some merry dump,  
to comfort me.

120 **First Musician.** Not a dump we, 'tis no time to play  
now.

**Peter.** You will not, then?

**First Musician.** No.

**Peter.** I will then give it you soundly.

125 **First Musician.** What will you give us?



**Peter.** No money, on my faith, but the gleek. I will give you the minstrel.

**First Musician.** Then will I give you the serving creature.

130 **Peter.** Then will I lay the serving creature's dagger on your pate. I will carry no crotchets. I'll re you, I'll fa you, do you note me?

**First Musician.** An you re us and fa us, you note us.

135 **Second Musician.** Pray you put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

**Peter.** Then have at you with my wit! I will drybeat you with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger. Answer me like men:

140 "When griping grief the heart doth wound  
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,  
Then music with her silver sound—"  
Why "silver sound"? Why "music with her silver sound"?—What say you, Simon Catling?

145 **First Musician.** Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

**Peter.** Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?

**Second Musician.** I say "silver sound" because musicians sound for silver.

**Peter.** Pretty too! What say you, James Soundpost?

150 **Third Musician.** Faith, I know not what to say.

**Peter.** Oh, I cry you mercy, you are the singer. I will say for you. It is "music with her silver sound" because musicians have no gold for sounding.

155 "Then music with her silver sound  
With speedy help doth lend redress."

[Exit.]

**First Musician.** What a pestilent knave is this same!

**Second Musician.** Hang him, Jack! Come, we'll in here.  
Tarry for the mourners, and stay dinner.

[Exeunt.]

## Connect to the Literature

### 1. What Do You Think?

How would you **summarize** the way circumstances have worked out so far for Juliet?

### Comprehension Check

- What reason does Paris give for Capulet's decision to move up the marriage plans?
- At first, what does Juliet believe is the only solution to her problem?
- What does Friar Laurence suggest that Juliet do to avoid the wedding?

## Think Critically

2. What aspects of Juliet's character do you think are most apparent in this act?
3. Explain whether you think Juliet was right to follow Friar Laurence's plan.

THINK ABOUT

- her hatred of the idea of marrying Paris and her love for Romeo
- her fears about the plan
- whether she could have turned to someone else for help

4. **Dramatic irony** exists when the reader or viewer knows something that one or more characters does not know. Find examples of dramatic irony in Act Four. What effect do these instances of irony create at this point in the play?
5. Do you feel sympathy for the Capulets, the Nurse, or Paris when they express grief over Juliet's death? Why or why not?
6. **ACTIVE READING READING SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA**  
Reread Juliet's soliloquy at the end of Act Four, Scene 3. In your **READER'S NOTEBOOK**, write down vocabulary and sentence structures in the passage that are unfamiliar. Use the sidenotes and, if necessary, a dictionary, to help you figure out the meaning of the difficult language, and jot down your ideas. Then, with a partner, review your notes. Compare your interpretations, and work together to clarify any remaining obscure passages.

## Extend Interpretations

7. **What If?** If the Nurse had accompanied Juliet to Friar Laurence's cell, do you think Juliet would have made a different decision? Explain your answer.
8. **Connect to Life** If you were Juliet, would you try Friar Laurence's solution? If so, why? If not, what would you do?

## Literary Analysis

**COMIC RELIEF** In his tragedies, Shakespeare often includes **comic relief**, or humorous incidents that relieve the overall emotional intensity. An example is the conversation between Peter and the musicians at the end of Act Four, Scene 5. This humorous interchange follows the grief-filled scene in which Juliet's body is discovered. The audience does not yet know whether Friar Laurence's plan for Romeo and Juliet will work, and the comical exchanges between Peter and the musicians are intended to provide a change of pace and a lightening of the atmosphere.

**Paired Activity** With a classmate, discuss your response to these questions:

- If you were producing a stage or film version of *Romeo and Juliet*, would you leave this incident out, or do you think it contributes to the effectiveness of the play? Explain your responses.
- What additional examples of comic relief do you find in Act Four?

### REVIEW MOTIVATION

**Character Motivation** refers to the reasons characters act or think in a certain way. Why do you think Juliet's father moves up the wedding? Why do you think Friar Laurence fails to tell Juliet's parents the truth?