

# Prologue

In a sonnet the Chorus summarizes what has happened so far in the play. He reviews how Romeo and Juliet have fallen in love and suggests both the problems and the delights they now face. He also includes hints about what will result from the events of Act One.

[Enter Chorus.]

**Chorus.** Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,  
And young affection gapes to be his heir.  
That fair for which love groaned for and would die,  
With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair.  
Now Romeo is beloved, and loves again,  
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks;  
But to his foe supposed he must complain,  
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.  
Being held a foe, he may not have access  
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,  
And she as much in love, her means much less  
To meet her new beloved anywhere;  
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,  
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.

[Exit.]

**1–4 Now . . . fair:** Romeo's love for Rosaline (**old desire**) is now dead. His new love (**young affection**) replaces the old. Compared to Juliet, Rosaline no longer seems so beautiful.

**6 What attracted Romeo and Juliet to each other?**

**7 but . . . complain:** Juliet, a Capulet, is Romeo's supposed enemy, yet she is the one to whom he must plead (**complain**) his love.

**14 temp'ring . . . sweet:** moderating great difficulties with extreme delights.

## Act Two

### SCENE 1 *A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.*

Later in the evening of the party, Romeo returns alone to the Capulet home, hoping for another glimpse of Juliet. He climbs the wall and hides outside, in the orchard. Meanwhile, Benvolio and Mercutio come looking for him, but he remains hidden behind the wall. Mercutio makes fun of Romeo and his lovesick condition. Keep in mind that Mercutio and Benvolio think Romeo is still in love with Rosaline, since they know nothing about his meeting with Juliet.

[Enter Romeo alone.]

**Romeo.** Can I go forward when my heart is here?  
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy center out.

[climbs the wall and leaps down within it]

[Enter Benvolio with Mercutio.]

**Benvolio.** Romeo! my cousin Romeo! Romeo!

**1–2 Can . . . out:** How can I leave when Juliet is still here? My body (**dull earth**) has to find its heart (**center**).

Balcony scene from the Globe Theatre's 2004 production



**Mercutio.**

He is wise,

And, on my life, hath stol'n him home to bed.

5 **Benvolio.** He ran this way, and leapt this orchard wall.  
Call, good Mercutio.

**Mercutio.** Nay, I'll conjure too.

Romeo! humors! madman! passion! lover!  
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;  
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied!  
10 Cry but "Ay me!" pronounce but "love" and "dove";  
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word, A  
One nickname for her purblind son and heir,  
Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim  
When King Cophetua loved the beggar maid!

15 He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;  
The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.  
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,  
By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,  
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,  
20 And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,  
That in thy likeness thou appear to us!

**Benvolio.** An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

**Mercutio.** This cannot anger him. 'Twould anger him  
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle  
25 Of some strange nature, letting it there stand  
Till she had laid it and conjured it down.  
That were some spite; my invocation  
Is fair and honest and in his mistress' name  
I conjure only but to raise up him.

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

**Mercutio.** If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.  
Now will he sit under a medlar tree  
35 And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit  
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.  
Oh, Romeo, that she were, O, that she were  
An open et cetera, thou a pop'rin pear!  
Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed;  
40 This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.  
Come, shall we go?

**Benvolio.** Go then, for 'tis in vain  
To seek him here that means not to be found.

[*Exeunt.*]

6 **conjure:** use magic to call him.

8–21 **Appear ... us:** Mercutio jokes about Romeo's lovesickness. He tries to make Romeo appear by suggestively naming parts of Rosaline's body.

#### A GRAMMAR AND STYLE

In lines 8–11, Shakespeare creates rhythm through **parallelism**, or the use of similar grammatical structures to express related ideas. Notice how each of these lines begins with a verb in the imperative mood.

20 **demesnes:** areas; **adjacent:** next to.

23–29 **'Twould ... raise up him:** It would anger him if I called a stranger to join his beloved (**mistress**), but I'm only calling Romeo to join her.

31 **to be ... night:** to keep company with the night, which is as gloomy as Romeo is.

34 **medlar:** a fruit that looks like a small brown apple.

39 **truckle bed:** trundle bed, a small bed that fits in beneath a bigger one.

## SCENE 2 *Capulet's orchard.*

The following is one of the most famous scenes in all literature. The speeches contain some of the most beautiful poetry Shakespeare ever wrote.

Juliet appears on the balcony outside her room. She cannot see Romeo, who stands in the garden just below. At the beginning of the scene, both characters are speaking private thoughts to themselves. Romeo, however, can hear Juliet as she expresses her love for him despite his family name. Eventually, he speaks directly to her, and they declare their love for each other. Just before dawn Romeo leaves to make plans for their wedding.

[Enter Romeo.]

**Romeo.** He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[Enter Juliet above at a window.]

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

5 Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

10 It is my lady; O, it is my love!

O that she knew she were!

She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?

Her eye discourses; I will answer it.

I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks.

15 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars

20 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night.  
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O that I were a glove upon that hand,

25 That I might touch that cheek! **B**

**Juliet.**

Ay me!

**Romeo.**

She speaks.

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,  
As is a winged messenger of heaven

**1 He jests ... wound:** Romeo has overheard Mercutio and comments that Mercutio makes fun of love because he has never been wounded by it.

**2–9 But soft ... cast it off:** Romeo sees Juliet at the window. For a moment he is speechless (**soft:** be still), but then he describes her beauty in glowing images.

**13–14 Her eye ... speaks:** Romeo shifts back and forth between wanting to speak to Juliet and being afraid.

**15–22 Two of ... not night:** Romeo compares Juliet's eyes to stars in the sky.

### ③ SOLILOQUY

To whom is Romeo speaking in lines 2–25? Explain what this soliloquy tells you about Romeo's thoughts.

**25** Juliet begins to speak, not knowing that Romeo is nearby.

**26–32 thou art ... of the air:** He compares Juliet to an angel (**winged messenger of heaven**) who stands on (**bestrides**) the clouds.

Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes  
30 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him  
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds  
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

**Juliet.** O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name!  
35 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

**Romeo** [aside]. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

**Juliet.** "Tis but thy name that is my enemy.  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
40 What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.  
45 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;  
And for that name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

**Romeo.** I take thee at thy word.  
50 Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

**Juliet.** What man art thou that, thus bescreened in night,  
So stumblest on my counsel?

**Romeo.** By a name  
I know not how to tell thee who I am.  
55 My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
Because it is an enemy to thee.  
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

**Juliet.** My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words  
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound.  
60 Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

**Romeo.** Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

**Juliet.** How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?  
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,  
And the place death, considering who thou art,  
65 If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

**33 wherefore:** why. Juliet asks why Romeo is who he is—someone from her enemy's family. *What does Juliet ask Romeo to do? What does she promise to do?*

**43–47** Juliet tries to convince herself that a name is just a meaningless word that has nothing to do with the person. She asks Romeo to get rid of (**doff**) his name.

**52–53** Juliet is startled that someone hiding (**bescreened**) nearby hears her private thoughts (**counsel**).

**63–65** *What warning does Juliet give Romeo?*

**Romeo.** With love's light wings did I o'er perch these walls;  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

70 **Juliet.** If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

**Romeo.** Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye  
Than twenty of their swords! Look thou but sweet,  
And I am proof against their enmity.

**Juliet.** I would not for the world they saw thee here.

75 **Romeo.** I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;  
And but thou love me, let them find me here.  
My life were better ended by their hate  
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love. C

**Juliet.** By whose direction foundst thou out this place?

80 **Romeo.** By love, that first did prompt me to enquire.  
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.  
I am no pilot, yet, wert thou as far  
As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,  
I would adventure for such merchandise.

85 **Juliet.** Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face;  
Else would a maiden blush bapaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.  
Fain would I dwell on form—fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!

90 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “Ay”;  
And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swearst,  
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,  
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

95 Or if thou thinkst I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light;

100 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou overheardst, ere I was ware,  
My true love's passion. Therefore pardon me,  
105 And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

**66–69 With ... me:** Love helped me climb (o'erperch) the walls. Neither walls nor your relatives are a hindrance (let) to me.

**72–73 Look ... enmity:** Smile on me, and I will be defended against my enemies' hatred (enmity).

**78 than death ... love:** than my death postponed (prorogued) if you don't love me.

### C CHARACTER

Reread lines 75–78, and explain what Romeo means. Do you think he is seriously thinking of death here, or is he just exaggerating because he's head over heels in love? Explain.

**85–89 Thou ... compliment:** Had I known you were listening, I would have gladly (fain) behaved more properly, but now it's too late for good manners (farewell compliment). *Why is Juliet embarrassed that Romeo overheard her?*

**92–93 At ... laughs:** Jove, the king of the gods, laughs at lovers who lie to each other.

**95–101 Or if ... strange:** You might think I've fallen in love too easily and that I'm too outspoken. But I'll be truer to you than those who play games to hide their real feelings (be strange).

**Romeo.** Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,  
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

**Juliet.** O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,  
110 That monthly changes in her circled orb,  
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

**Romeo.** What shall I swear by?

**Juliet.** Do not swear at all;  
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,  
Which is the god of my idolatry,  
115 And I'll believe thee.

109–111 *Why doesn't Juliet want Romeo to swear by the moon?*



Balcony scene from the Seattle Repertory Theatre's 2003 production

**Romeo.** If my heart's dear love—

**Juliet.** Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,  
I have no joy of this contract tonight.  
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;  
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be  
120 Ere one can say “It lightens.” Sweet, good night!  
This bud of love, by summer’s ripening breath,  
May prove a beauteous flow’r when next we meet.  
Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest  
Come to thy heart as that within my breast! **D**

125 **Romeo.** O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

**Juliet.** What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

**Romeo.** The exchange of thy love’s faithful vow for mine.

**Juliet.** I gave thee mine before thou didst request it;  
And yet I would it were to give again.

130 **Romeo.** Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

**Juliet.** But to be frank and give it thee again.

And yet I wish but for the thing I have.  
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,

135 The more I have, for both are infinite.  
I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!

[Nurse *calls within.*]

Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.  
Stay but a little, I will come again.

[*Exit.*]

**Romeo.** O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard,  
140 Being in night, all this is but a dream,  
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

[*Re-enter Juliet, above.*]

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

**Nurse** [*within*]. Madam!

150 **Juliet.** I come, anon.—But if thou meanest not well,  
I do beseech thee—

**117 I have . . . contract:** I am concerned about this declaration of love (**contract**).

## **D** CHARACTER

Reread lines 116–124, and describe Juliet’s attitude at this point. How does she feel about Romeo? Why does she seem uneasy about their relationship?

**137–138 anon:** right away. Juliet calls to her nurse but asks Romeo to wait, as she will come back soon.

**143–146 If that . . . rite:** I’ll send a messenger to you tomorrow. If your intention is to marry me, tell the messenger where and when the ceremony will be.

**150–151 But if . . . thee:** Juliet is still worried that Romeo is not serious.

**Nurse** [within]. Madam!

**Juliet.** By-and-by I come.—  
To cease thy suit and leave me to my grief.  
Tomorrow will I send.

**Romeo.** So thrive my soul—

**Juliet.** A thousand times good night! [Exit.]

155 **Romeo.** A thousand times the worse, to want thy light!  
Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books;  
But love from love, towards school with heavy looks.

[Enter Juliet again, above.]

**Juliet.** Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falc'ner's voice  
To lure this tassel-gentle back again! E  
160 Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud;  
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,  
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine  
With repetition of my Romeo's name.  
Romeo!

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

**Juliet.** Romeo!

**Romeo.** My sweet?

**Juliet.** What o'clock tomorrow  
Shall I send to thee?  
**Romeo.** By the hour of nine.  
170 **Juliet.** I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then.  
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

**Romeo.** Let me stand here till thou remember it.  
**Juliet.** I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,  
Rememb'ring how I love thy company.  
175 **Romeo.** And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,  
Forgetting any other home but this.

**Juliet.** 'Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone—  
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,  
That lets it hop a little from her hand,  
180 Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,  
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,  
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

**Romeo.** I would I were thy bird.

**156–157 Love . . . looks:** The simile means that lovers meet as eagerly as schoolboys leave their books; lovers separate with the sadness of boys going to school.

**COMMON CORE RL 6**

**E CULTURAL SETTING**

In lines 158–159, Juliet is using a metaphor to describe how desperately she wants to call out Romeo's name. Much of Shakespeare's **figurative language** reflects the historical and cultural setting in which he wrote; this figurative language reflects the popularity of falconry in Elizabethan times. Does language that reflects a historical setting help draw you into the play? Explain.

**158–163 Hist . . . name:** Listen, Romeo, I wish I could speak your name as loudly as a falconer calls his falcon (**tassel-gentle**), but because of my parents I must whisper. **Echo** was a nymph in Greek mythology whose unreturned love for Narcissus caused her to waste away till only her voice was left.

**177–182 I would . . . liberty:** I know you must go, but I want you close to me like a pet bird that a thoughtless child (**wanton**) keeps on a string.

**Juliet.** Sweet, so would I.

Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

185 Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

[*Exit.*]

**Romeo.** Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!  
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!  
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,

190 His help to crave and my dear hap to tell.

[*Exit.*]

COMMON CORE L 5a

### Language Coach

**Etymology** *Cherish* comes from the Latin root *carus*, meaning “dear; valued.” What does *cherishing* mean in line 184? How can someone kill by cherishing?

189–190 **ghostly father:** spiritual adviser or priest; **dear hap:** good fortune.

## SCENE 3 *Friar Laurence's cell in the monastery.*

*Romeo goes from Capulet's garden to the monastery where Friar Laurence lives. The friar knows Romeo well and often gives him advice. As the scene begins, Friar Laurence is gathering herbs in the early morning. He talks of good and bad uses for herbs. Keep this in mind, since Friar Laurence's skill at mixing herbs becomes important later in the play. Romeo tells the friar that he loves Juliet and wants to marry her. The friar is amazed that Romeo has forgotten about Rosaline so easily and suggests that Romeo might be acting in haste. Eventually, however, he agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet, hoping that the marriage will end the feud between their families.*

[Enter Friar Laurence alone, with a basket.]

**Friar Laurence.** The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,  
Chequ'ring the Eastern clouds with streaks of light;  
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels  
From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.

5 Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye  
The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,  
I must upfill this osier cage of ours  
With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.

The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb,  
10 What is her burying grave, that is her womb;  
And from her womb children of divers kind  
We sucking on her natural bosom find;  
Many for many virtues excellent,  
None but for some, and yet all different.

15 O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies  
In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities;  
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live  
But to the earth some special good doth give;

1–30 Friar Laurence begins his speech by describing how night changes into day. He then speaks of the herbs he is collecting. The friar is particularly fascinated with the idea that in herbs as well as man both good and evil can exist.

4 **Titan** is the god whose chariot pulls the sun into the sky each morning.

7 **osier cage:** willow basket.

9–12 **The earth . . . find:** The same earth that acts as a tomb is also the womb, or birthplace, of various useful plants that people can harvest.

15–18 **mickle:** great. The friar says that nothing from the earth is so evil that it doesn't do some good.

Nor aught so good but, strained from that fair use,  
20 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.  
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,  
And vice sometime's by action dignified.  
Within the infant rind of this small flower  
Poison hath residence, and medicine power;  
25 For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;  
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.  
Two such opposed kings encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs—grace and rude will;  
And where the worser is predominant,  
30 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

[Enter Romeo.]

**Romeo.** Good morrow, father.

**Friar Laurence.** Benedicite!  
What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?  
Young son, it argues a distempered head  
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed.  
35 Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,  
And where care lodges sleep will never lie;  
But where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain  
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.  
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure  
40 Thou art uproused with some distemp'rature;  
Or if not so, then here I hit it right—  
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

**Romeo.** That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

**Friar Laurence.** God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?  
45 **Romeo.** With Rosaline, my ghostly father? No.  
I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

**Friar Laurence.** That's my good son! But where hast thou been  
then?

**Romeo.** I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.  
I have been feasting with mine enemy,  
50 Where on a sudden one hath wounded me  
That's by me wounded. Both our remedies  
Within thy help and holy physic lies.  
I bear no hatred, blessed man, for, lo,  
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

55 **Friar Laurence.** Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.  
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

**23–26 Within . . . heart:** He holds a flower that can be used either as a poison or as a medicine. If the flower is smelled, its fragrance can improve health in each part of the body; if it is eaten, it causes death.

**28 grace and rude will:** good and evil. Both exist in people as well as in plants.

**31 Benedicite** (bĕ'nĕ-dī'sĭ-tē'): God bless you.

**33–42 it argues . . . tonight:** Only a disturbed (*distempered*) mind could make you get up so early. Old people may have trouble sleeping, but it is not normal for someone as young as you. Or were you up all night?

**44 God . . . Rosaline:** The friar is shocked that Romeo has not been to bed yet.  
*Where does he think Romeo has been?*

**49–56** Romeo tries to explain the situation, asking for help both for himself and his “foe” (Juliet). The friar does not understand Romeo's convoluted language and asks him to speak clearly so that he can help.

**Romeo.** Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set  
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;  
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,  
60 And all combined, save what thou must combine  
By holy marriage. When, and where, and how  
We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow,  
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,  
That thou consent to marry us today.

65 **Friar Laurence.** Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here!

Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,  
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies  
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

66–68 *What is Friar Laurence saying  
in these lines?*



Friar Laurence counsels Romeo in the University of Victoria's 1998 production.

Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine  
70 Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!  
How much salt water thrown away in waste,  
To season love, that of it doth not taste!  
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,  
Thy old groans ring yet in mine ancient ears.  
75 Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit  
Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.  
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,  
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.  
And art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence then:  
80 Women may fall when there's no strength in men.  
**Romeo.** Thou chidst me oft for loving Rosaline.  
**Friar Laurence.** For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.  
**Romeo.** And badest me bury love.  
**Friar Laurence.** Not in a grave  
To lay one in, another ought to have.  
85 **Romeo.** I pray thee chide not. She whom I love now  
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.  
The other did not so.  
**Friar Laurence.** O, she knew well  
Thy love did read by rote, that could not spell.  
But come, young waverer, come go with me.  
90 In one respect I'll thy assistant be;  
For this alliance may so happy prove  
To turn your households' rancor to pure love. F  
**Romeo.** O, let us hence! I stand on sudden haste.  
**Friar Laurence.** Wisely, and slow. They stumble that run fast.  
[*Exeunt.*]

**69 brine:** salt water—that is, the tears that Romeo has been shedding for Rosaline.

**80 Women ... men:** If men are so weak, women may be forgiven for sinning.

**81–82 chidst:** scolded. The friar replies that he scolded Romeo for being lovesick, not for loving.

**85–88 She whom ... spell:** Romeo says that the woman he loves feels the same way about him. That wasn't true of Rosaline. The friar replies that Rosaline knew that he didn't know what real love is.

**91–92 For this ... prove:** this marriage may work out so well; **rancor:** bitter hate.

F **CHARACTER**

Why does Friar Laurence agree to help Romeo marry Juliet, despite his worry that Romeo falls in love too easily? Explain the friar's motives.

## SCENE 4 *A street.*

Several hours after his meeting with Friar Laurence, Romeo meets Benvolio and Mercutio in the street. He is excited and happy; his mood is key to the comic nature of this scene, which includes much talk of swordplay and many suggestive jokes. Mercutio makes fun of Tybalt and teases Romeo. The nurse comes to carry a message from Romeo to Juliet. Romeo tells her that Juliet should meet him at Friar Laurence's cell for their secret marriage ceremony.

[Enter Benvolio and Mercutio.]

**Mercutio.** Where the devil should this Romeo be?  
Came he not home tonight?

**Benvolio.** Not to his father's. I spoke with his man.

**3 man:** servant.

**Mercutio.** Why, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,  
5 Torments him so that he will sure run mad.

**Benvolio.** Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet,  
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

**Mercutio.** A challenge, on my life.

**Benvolio.** Romeo will answer it.

10 **Mercutio.** Any man that can write may answer a letter.

**Benvolio.** Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares,  
being dared.

**Mercutio.** Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! stabbed with a  
white wench's black eye; shot through the ear with a love song;  
15 the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft;  
and is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

**Benvolio.** Why, what is Tybalt?

**Mercutio.** More than Prince of Cats, I can tell you. O, he's the  
courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing  
20 pricksong—keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his  
minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom! the very  
butcher of a silk button, a duelist, a duelist! a gentleman of the  
very first house, of the first and second cause. Ah, the immortal  
*passado!* the *punto reverso!* the *hay!*

25 **Benvolio.** The what?

**Mercutio.** The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting fantasticoes—  
these new tuners of accent! “By Jesu, a very good blade! a very  
tall man! a very good whore!” Why, is not this a lamentable thing,  
grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies,  
30 these fashion-mongers, these *perdona-mi*'s, who stand so much  
on the new form that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench?  
O, their bones, their bones!

[Enter Romeo, *no longer moody.*]

**Benvolio.** Here comes Romeo! here comes Romeo!

**Mercutio.** Without his roe, like a dried herring. O, flesh, flesh,  
35 how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch  
flowed in. Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen wench (marry,  
she had a better love to berhyme her), Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra  
a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots, Thisbe a grey eye

**6–12 Tybalt . . . dared:** Tybalt, still angry  
about Romeo's crashing the Capulet  
party, has sent a letter challenging  
Romeo to a duel. Benvolio says that  
Romeo will do more than answer the  
letter; he will accept Tybalt's challenge  
and fight him.

**15 blind bow-boy's butt-shaft:** Cupid's  
dull practice arrow. Mercutio suggests  
that Romeo fell in love with very little  
work on Cupid's part.

**18–24 More than . . . hay:** Mercutio mocks  
Tybalt's name. **Prince of Cats** refers to  
a cat in a fable, named Tybalt, who was  
known for his slyness. Then Mercutio  
makes fun of Tybalt's fancy new style of  
dueling, comparing it to precision  
singing (*pricksong*). **Passado, punto**  
**reverso**, and **hay** were terms used in the  
new dueling style.

**26–32 The pox . . . their bones:** Mercutio  
continues to make fun of people who  
embrace new styles and new manners  
of speaking.

**34–39 without his roe:** only part of  
himself (Mercutio makes fun of Romeo's  
name and his lovesickness); **numbers:**  
verses. Mercutio mentions Petrarch,  
who wrote sonnets to his love, Laura.  
According to Mercutio, Romeo's feelings  
for Rosaline are so intense that great  
loves in literature—Laura, Dido, and  
others—could never measure up.

or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, *bon jour!* There's  
40 a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the  
counterfeit fairly last night.

**Romeo.** Good Morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give  
you?

**Mercutio.** The slip, sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?

45 **Romeo.** Pardon, good Mercutio. My business was great, and in  
such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

**Mercutio.** That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains  
a man to bow in the hams.

**Romeo.** Meaning, to curtsy.

50 **Mercutio.** Thou hast most kindly hit it.

**Romeo.** A most courteous exposition.

**Mercutio.** Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

**Romeo.** Pink for flower.

**Mercutio.** Right.

55 **Romeo.** Why, then is my pump well-flowered.

**Mercutio.** Well said! Follow me this jest now till thou hast worn  
out thy pump, that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest  
may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

**Romeo.** Oh, single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!

60 **Mercutio.** Come between us, good Benvolio! My wits faint.

**Romeo.** Switch and spurs, switch and spurs! or I'll cry a match.

**Mercutio.** Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase, I am done;  
for thou hast more of the wild goose in one of thy wits than, I  
am sure, I have in my whole five. Was I with you there for the  
65 goose?

**Romeo.** Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast  
not there for the goose.

**Mercutio.** I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

**Romeo.** Nay, good goose, bite not!

70 **Mercutio.** Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp  
sauce.

**Romeo.** And is it not, then, well served in to a sweet goose?

**Mercutio.** O, here's a wit of cheveril, that stretches from an inch  
narrow to an ell broad!

39–44 *bon jour*: “Good day” in French;  
*There's ... last night*: Here's a greeting to  
match your fancy French trousers (*slop*).  
You did a good job of getting away from  
us last night. (A piece of counterfeit  
money was called a *slip*.)

44–81 In these lines, Romeo and  
Mercutio have a battle of wits. They keep  
trying to top each other with funnier  
comments and cleverer puns.

55 **pump:** shoe; **well-flowered:** Shoes  
were “pinked,” or punched out in  
flowerlike designs.

61 **Switch ... match:** Keep going, or I'll  
claim victory.

64–65 **Was ... goose:** Have I proved that  
you are a foolish person?

73 **cheveril:** kidskin, which is flexible.  
Mercutio means that a little wit stretches  
a long way.

75 **Romeo.** I stretch it out for that word “broad,” which, added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

**Mercutio.** Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature. For this driveling love is like 80 a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

**Benvolio.** Stop there, stop there!

**Mercutio.** Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.

**Benvolio.** Thou wouldest else have made thy tale large.

85 **Mercutio.** O, thou art deceived! I would have made it short; for I was come to the whole depth of my tale, and meant indeed to occupy the argument no longer.

[Enter Nurse and Peter, her servant. He is carrying a large fan.]

**Romeo.** Here’s goodly gear!

**Mercutio.** A sail, a sail!

90 **Benvolio.** Two, two! a shirt and a smock.

**Nurse.** Peter!

**Peter.** Anon.

**Nurse.** My fan, Peter.

95 **Mercutio.** Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan’s the fairer of the two.

**Nurse.** God ye good Morrow, gentlemen.

**Mercutio.** God ye good-den, fair gentlewoman.

**Nurse.** Is it good-den?

100 **Mercutio.** ’Tis no less, I tell ye, for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

**Nurse.** Out upon you! What a man are you!

**Romeo.** One, gentlewoman, that God hath made himself to mar.

105 **Nurse.** By my troth, it is well said. “For himself to mar,” quoth’ a? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

**Romeo.** I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you sought him. I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse.

80–81 **great natural:** an idiot, like a jester or clown who carries a fool’s stick (**bauble**).

88–89 **goodly gear:** something fine to joke about; **a sail:** Mercutio likens the nurse in all her petticoats to a huge ship coming toward them.

93 Fans were usually carried only by fine ladies. The nurse is trying to pretend that she is more than a servant.

**Nurse.** You say well.

110 **Mercutio.** Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, i' faith! wisely, wisely.

**Nurse.** If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

**Benvolio.** She will endite him to some supper.

**Mercutio.** A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

115 **Romeo.** What hast thou found?

**Mercutio.** No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

[*sings*]

120 "An old hare hoar,  
And an old hare hoar,  
Is very good meat in Lent.  
But a hare that is hoar,  
Is too much for a score  
When it hoars ere it be spent."

Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner thither.

125 **Romeo.** I will follow you.

**Mercutio.** Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, [*sings*] lady, lady, lady.

[*Exeunt Mercutio and Benvolio.*]

**Nurse.** Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery?

130 **Romeo.** A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk and will speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month.

**Nurse.** An 'a speak anything against me, I'll take him down, an 'a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skainsmates. [turning to Peter] And thou must 135 stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

**Peter.** I saw no man use you at his pleasure. If I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

112–113 **confidence:** The nurse means *conference*; she uses big words without understanding their meaning; **endite:** Benvolio makes fun of the nurse by using this word rather than *invite*.

114–124 Mercutio calls the nurse a **bawd**, or woman who runs a house of prostitution. His song uses the insulting puns **hare**, a rabbit or prostitute, and **hoar**, old.

128 **ropery:** roguery, or jokes.

133–134 The nurse is angry that Mercutio treated her like one of his loose women (**flirt-gills**) or his gangsterlike friends (**skainsmates**).

## Behind the Curtain

The Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival's 1992 production



The University of South Carolina's 1999 production



## Set Design

Often, set designers recreate the world of *Romeo and Juliet* in strikingly unique ways. Designers of the productions pictured here created radically different **sets** for the balcony scene. List three adjectives you would use to describe each set. What factors might make a designer choose to create one of these particular set styles?

The Royal Shakespeare Company's 1992 production



140 **Nurse.** Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave! Pray you, sir, a word; and as I told you, my young lady bade me enquire you out. What she bid me say, I will keep to myself; but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behavior, as they say; for the gentlewoman is young; and therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

145 **Romeo.** Nurse, command me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee—

150 **Nurse.** Good heart, and i' faith I will tell her as much. Lord, Lord! she will be a joyful woman.

**Romeo.** What wilt thou tell her, nurse? Thou dost not mark me.

**Nurse.** I will tell her, sir, that you do protest, which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

155 **Romeo.** Bid her devise

Some means to come to shrift this afternoon;  
And there she shall at Friar Laurence' cell  
Be shrived and married. Here is for thy pains.

**Nurse.** No, truly, sir; not a penny.

160 **Romeo.** Go to! I say you shall.

**Nurse.** This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

**Romeo.** And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall.

Within this hour my man shall be with thee  
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair,  
165 Which to the high topgallant of my joy  
Must be my convoy in the secret night.  
Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.  
Farewell. Command me to thy mistress.

**Nurse.** Now God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

170 **Romeo.** What sayst thou, my dear nurse?

**Nurse.** Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,  
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

**Romeo.** I warrant thee my man's as true as steel.

**Nurse.** Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord!  
175 when 'twas a little prating thing—O, there is a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard; but she, good soul, had as lief see a toad, a very toad, as see him. I anger her

142–147 The nurse warns Romeo that he'd better mean what he said about marrying Juliet. She holds back her news while she tries to decide if Romeo's love is genuine.

148 **commend me:** give my respectful greetings.

155–159 Romeo tells the nurse to have Juliet come to Friar Laurence's cell this afternoon, using the excuse that she is going to confess her sins (**shrift**). There she will receive forgiveness for her sins (**be shrived**) and be married.

164–165 **tackled stair:** rope ladder;  
**topgallant:** highest point.

167–172 **quit thy pains:** reward you. The nurse then asks Romeo if his servant can be trusted, then quotes the saying that two can keep a secret but not three.

174–177 The nurse begins to babble about Paris' proposal but says that Juliet would rather look at a toad than at Paris.

sometimes, and tell her that Paris is the properer man; but I'll warrant you, when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout in the 180 versal world. Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?

**Romeo.** Ay, nurse, what of that? Both with an R.

**Nurse.** Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name. R is for the—No; I know it begins with some other letter; and she hath the prettiest 185 sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

**Romeo.** Commend me to thy lady.

**Nurse.** Ay, a thousand times. [Exit Romeo.] Peter!

**Peter.** Anon.

190 **Nurse.** Peter, take my fan, and go before, and apace.

[Exeunt.]

**179–186 clout:** old cloth; **the versal world:** the entire world; **Doth not . . . hear it:** The nurse tries to recall a clever saying that Juliet made up about Romeo and rosemary, the herb for remembrance, but cannot remember it. She is sure that the two words couldn't begin with R because this letter sounds like a snarling dog; **sententious:** The nurse means *sentences*.

190 **apace:** quickly.

## SCENE 5 *Capulet's orchard.*

*Juliet is a nervous wreck, having waited for more than three hours for the nurse to return. When the nurse does arrive, she simply won't come to the point. Juliet gets more and more upset, until the nurse finally reveals the wedding arrangements.*

[Enter Juliet.]

**Juliet.** The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;  
In half an hour she promised to return.  
Perchance she cannot meet him. That's not so.  
O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,  
5 Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams  
Driving back shadows over lowering hills.  
Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw Love,  
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings. **G**  
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill  
10 Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve  
Is three long hours; yet she is not come.  
Had she affections and warm youthful blood,  
She would be as swift in motion as a ball;  
My words would bandy her to my sweet love,  
15 And his to me.  
But old folks, many feign as they were dead—  
Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.  
[Enter Nurse and Peter.] O God, she comes! O honey nurse,  
what news?

**4–6 Love's . . . hills:** Love's messengers should be thoughts, which travel ten times faster than sunbeams.

**7 nimble-pinioned . . . Love:** Swift-winged doves pull the chariot of Venus, goddess of love.

### **G ALLUSION**

What do Juliet's allusions to Venus and to Cupid emphasize about her state of mind as she waits for the nurse to return?

**14 bandy:** toss.

**16 feign as:** act as if.

Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

20 **Nurse.** Peter, stay at the gate.

[Exit Peter.]

**Juliet.** Now, good sweet nurse—O Lord, why lookst thou sad?  
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;  
If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news  
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

25 **Nurse.** I am aweary, give me leave awhile.

Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunce have I had!

**Juliet.** I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.  
Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good nurse, speak.

**Nurse.** Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile?

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

**Juliet.** How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath  
To say to me that thou art out of breath?  
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay  
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.

35 Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.

Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.  
Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

**Nurse.** Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how  
to choose a man. Romeo? No, not he. Though his face be better  
40 than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand and a  
foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are  
past compare. He is not the flower of courtesy, but, I'll warrant  
him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench; serve God. What,  
have you dined at home?

45 **Juliet.** No, no. But all this did I know before.

What say he of our marriage? What of that?

**Nurse.** Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!

It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back o' t'other side—ah, my back, my back!

50 Beshrew your heart for sending me about

To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

**Juliet.** I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.

Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

21–22 The nurse teases Juliet by putting  
on a sad face as if the news were bad.

25–26 **give me . . . I had:** Leave me alone  
for a while. I ache all over because of the  
running back and forth I've been doing.

#### COMMON CORE L4

#### Language Coach

**Multiple Meanings** The word *stay* has something other than its usual meaning in line 29. What do you think it means? (Hint: The expression “What haste!” means “What a hurry you’re in!”)

36 **I'll . . . circumstance:** I'll wait for  
the details.

38 **simple:** foolish.

50–51 **Beshrew . . . down:** Curse you  
for making me endanger my health by  
running around. *Considering the nurse's  
feelings for Juliet, do you think this is  
really an angry curse? Explain.*

**Nurse.** Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous,  
55 and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a virtuous—Where  
is your mother?

**Juliet.** Where is my mother? Why, she is within.  
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!  
“Your love says, like an honest gentleman,  
60 ‘Where is your mother?’”

**Nurse.** O God’s Lady dear!  
Are you so hot? Marry come up, I trow.  
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?  
Hence forward do your messages yourself.

**Juliet.** Here’s such a coil! Come, what says Romeo?  
65 **Nurse.** Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

**Juliet.** I have.

**Nurse.** Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence’ cell;  
There stays a husband to make you a wife.  
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks:  
70 They’ll be in scarlet straight at any news.  
Hie you to church; I must another way,  
To fetch a ladder, by the which your love  
Must climb a bird’s nest soon when it is dark.  
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;  
75 But you shall bear the burden soon at night.  
Go; I’ll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

**Juliet.** Hie to high fortune! Honest nurse, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

**61–62 Marry ... bones:** Control yourself!  
Is this the treatment I get for my pain?

**64 coil:** fuss.

**67–68 Then hie ... a wife:** Then go  
quickly to Friar Laurence’s cell, where  
Romeo is waiting to marry you.

**71–73** The nurse will get the ladder that  
Romeo will use to climb to Juliet’s room  
after they are married.

## SCENE 6 *Friar Laurence’s cell.*

*Friar Laurence cautions Romeo to be more sensible in his love for Juliet. When she arrives, the two confess their love to each other and prepare to be married by Friar Laurence.*

[Enter Friar Laurence and Romeo.]

**Friar Laurence.** So smile the heavens upon this holy act  
That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!

**1–2 So smile ... us not:** May heaven  
so bless this act that we won’t regret  
it in the future (**after-hours**).

**Romeo.** Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can,  
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy  
5 That one short minute gives me in her sight.  
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,  
Then love-devouring death do what he dare—  
It is enough I may but call her mine.

**4 countervail:** outweigh.

**Friar Laurence.** These violent delights have violent ends  
10 And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,  
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness  
And in the taste confounds the appetite.  
Therefore love moderately: long love doth so;  
15 Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow. **H**

[Enter Juliet.]

Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot  
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.  
A lover may bestride the gossamer  
That idles in the wanton summer air,  
20 And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

**Juliet.** Good even to my ghostly confessor.

**Friar Laurence.** Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

**Juliet.** As much to him, else is his thanks too much.

**Romeo.** Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy  
25 Be heaped like mine, and that thy skill be more  
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath  
This neighbor air, and let rich music's tongue  
Unfold the imagined happiness that both  
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

30 **Juliet.** Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,  
Brags of his substance, not of ornament.  
They are but beggars that can count their worth;  
But my true love is grown to such excess  
I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

35 **Friar Laurence.** Come, come with me, and we will make short work;  
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one. **I**

[*Exeunt.*]

**9–15 These . . . slow:** The friar compares Romeo's passion to gunpowder and the fire that ignites it—both are destroyed—then to honey, whose sweetness can destroy the appetite. He reminds Romeo to practice moderation in love.

## **H TRAGEDY**

Consider what you know about Shakespearean tragedy. Do you think Romeo will take the advice Friar Laurence gives him in lines 9–15? Explain.

**18–20 A lover . . . vanity:** A lover can walk across a spider's web (**gossamer**) without falling.

**23 as much to him:** I give the same greeting to Romeo that he offers to me.

**24–29 if the measure . . . encounter:** If you are as happy as I am and have more skill to proclaim it, then sweeten the air by singing of our happiness to the world.

**30–31 Conceit . . . ornament:** True understanding (**conceit**) needs no words.

## COMMON CORE RL 4

### **I PARADOX**

A **paradox** is a seemingly contradictory statement that nevertheless expresses a truth. How is the thought expressed by Friar Laurence in line 37 a paradox? Be sure to explain the truth that his statement reveals.

## Comprehension

- Recall** Who challenges Romeo to a duel, and why?
- Recall** What important message from Romeo does the nurse bring to Juliet?
- Clarify** Why does Friar Laurence agree to marry Romeo and Juliet despite his reservations? Explain what he hopes this marriage will accomplish.

## Text Analysis

- 4. **Reading Shakespearean Drama** Examine the events you recorded in your chart as you read Act Two. Which events seem most crucial in escalating the **conflicts** in the plot? What **theme** seems to be emerging? Explain your answers.
- 5. **Make Inferences About Character Motives** Why do Romeo and Juliet rush to get married after declaring their love? Support your inference with evidence from the text. Then explain whether you think the young lovers get married too soon, and why or why not.
- 6. **Analyze Soliloquy and Aside** Identify at least one soliloquy and one aside in Act Two and record them in a chart like the one shown. Complete the chart by explaining what each example reveals about the character speaking.

<i>Scene and Lines</i>	<i>Character Who Speaks</i>	<i>Soliloquy or Aside?</i>	<i>What Is Revealed?</i>
Scene 2, lines 1–25	Romeo		

7. **Analyze Character Development** Compare Romeo's behavior before he meets Juliet with his behavior after they declare their love for each other. What do you learn about Romeo from the change in his behavior?

## Text Criticism

8. **Author's Style** Shakespeare is often praised for his masterly use of **figurative language**, or language that communicates ideas beyond the ordinary, literal meaning of the words. Find two examples of particularly striking figurative language in Act Two and discuss what makes each example effective.

### COMMON CORE

- RL 2** Determine a theme of a text. **RL 3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. **RL 4** Determine the figurative meaning of words and phrases. **RL 10** Read and comprehend dramas. **L 5a** Interpret figures of speech and analyze their role in the text.