

# 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, which 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.*

[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.

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

5 Uneven is the course; I like it not. **A**

**Paris.** Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,  
And therefore have I little talked of love;  
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.

Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous  
10 That she do give her sorrow so much sway,  
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage  
To stop the inundation of her tears,  
Which, too much minded by herself alone,  
May be put from her by society.

15 Now do you know the reason of this haste.

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

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

[Enter Juliet.]

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

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

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

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

**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.

**2–3 My . . . haste:** Capulet is eager to have the wedding on Thursday and so am I.

**4–5 You . . . course:** You don't know how Juliet feels about this. It's a very uncertain (**uneven**) plan.

### **A CHARACTER**

What is the friar's real **motive** for wanting to slow down the wedding preparations?

**13–14 which . . . society:** which, thought about too much by her in privacy, may be put from her mind if she is forced to be with others. *According to Paris, why does Capulet want Juliet to marry so quickly?*

**19–28** Juliet once again chooses her words carefully to avoid lying and to avoid telling her secret.

Friar Laurence mixes a potion in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1995 production.



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

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

**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.

30 **Juliet.** The tears have got small victory by that,  
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.

35 **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 daughter, now.

40 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.*]

**Juliet.** O, shut the door! and when thou hast done so,  
45 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.  
I hear thou must, and nothing may prorogue it,  
On Thursday next be married to this County.

50 **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,  
Do thou but call my resolution wise  
And with this knife I'll help it presently.

55 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,  
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt  
Turn to another, this shall slay them both.

60 Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time,

25 *Whom does "him" refer to in this line?*

30–31 **The tears . . . spite:** The tears haven't ruined my face; it wasn't all that beautiful before they did their damage.

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

47–48 **compass:** limit; **prorogue:** postpone.

52–53 **If in . . . wise:** If you can't find a way to help me, at least agree that my plan is wise.

56–67 **And ere this hand . . . of remedy:** 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.

## Language Coach

**Commonly Confused Words** The words *council* and *counsel* are easy to confuse. One means “advice” or “to advise”; the other refers to a group of people who advise, administrate, or govern. Which is which? What does *counsel* mean in line 61?

**71–76 If, rather than . . . remedy:** If you are desperate enough to kill yourself, then you’ll be daring enough to try the deathlike solution that I propose.

**77–88** Juliet gives a lengthy list of things she would do rather than marry Paris. **charnel house:** a storehouse for bones from old graves; **reeky shanks:** stinking bones; **chapless:** without jaws. The description in lines 84–88 comes closer to Juliet’s future than she knows.

**89–120** The friar explains his plan.

**93 vial:** small bottle.

**96–106 humor:** liquid; **no pulse . . . pleasant sleep:** Your pulse will stop (**surcease**), and you will turn cold, pale, and stiff, as if you were dead; this condition will last for 42 hours.

Give me some present counsel; or, behold,  
 ’Twi’xt my extremes and me this bloody knife  
 Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that  
 Which the commission of thy years and art  
 65 Could to no issue of true honor bring.  
 Be not so long to speak. I long to die  
 If what thou speakst speak not of remedy.

**Friar Laurence.** Hold, daughter, I do spy a kind of hope,  
 Which craves as desperate an execution  
 70 As that is desperate which we would prevent.  
 If, rather than to marry County Paris,  
 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,  
 75 That copes with death himself to scape from it;  
 And, if thou darest, I’ll give thee remedy.

**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  
 80 Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears,  
 Or shut me nightly in a charnel house,  
 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  
 85 And hide me with a dead man in his shroud—  
 Things that, to hear them told, have made me 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  
 90 To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow.  
 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,  
 And this distilled liquor drink thou off;  
 95 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  
 100 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  
105 Thou shalt continue two-and-forty hours,  
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.  
Then, as the manner of our country is,  
110 In thy best robes uncovered on the bier  
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault  
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.  
In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,  
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;  
115 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  
120 Abate thy valor in the acting it.

**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  
To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

125 **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.

107–112 *According to the friar's plan, what will happen when Paris comes to wake Juliet?*

111–112 **same ancient vault . . . lie:** same ancient tomb where all members of the Capulet family are buried.

114 **drift:** plan.

119–120 **inconstant toy:** foolish whim;  
**abate thy valor:** weaken your courage.

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

**Capulet.** Go, begone.

[*Exit Servingman.*]

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  
Of disobedient opposition  
To you and your behests, and am enjoined

20 By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here  
To beg your pardon. Pardon, I beseech you!  
Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

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

25 **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.

**Capulet.** Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.  
This is as't should be. Let me see the County.

30 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. **C**

**Juliet.** Nurse, will you go with me into my closet  
To help me sort such needful ornaments

35 As you think fit to furnish me tomorrow?

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

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

[*Exeunt Juliet and Nurse.*]

## **B COMIC RELIEF**

Think about the purpose that comic relief serves. Why might Shakespeare have chosen to begin this scene with a light, humorous conversation?

**10 unfurnished:** unprepared.

**14** A silly, stubborn girl she is.

**19 behests:** orders; **enjoined:** commanded.

**24** I'll have this wedding scheduled for tomorrow morning.

## **C DRAMATIC IRONY**

What is ironic about Capulet's praise of Friar Laurence?

**36–39** Lady Capulet urges her husband to wait until Thursday as originally planned. She needs time to get food (**provision**) ready for the wedding party.

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

**Capulet.** Tush, I will stir about,  
40 And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.  
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her.  
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  
45 To County Paris, to prepare him up  
Against tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light,  
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed. **D**  
[*Exeunt.*]

**39–46** Capulet is so set on Wednesday that he promises to make the arrangements himself.

**D TRAGEDY**

Think about how the **plot** of this tragedy is unfolding. What does moving the wedding up by one day do to Friar Laurence's plan?

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

*Juliet sends her mother and the nurse 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 orisons:** prayers.

[*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.  
So please you, let me now be left alone,  
10 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.

**7–8 we have . . . tomorrow:** We have picked out (**culled**) everything appropriate for the wedding tomorrow.

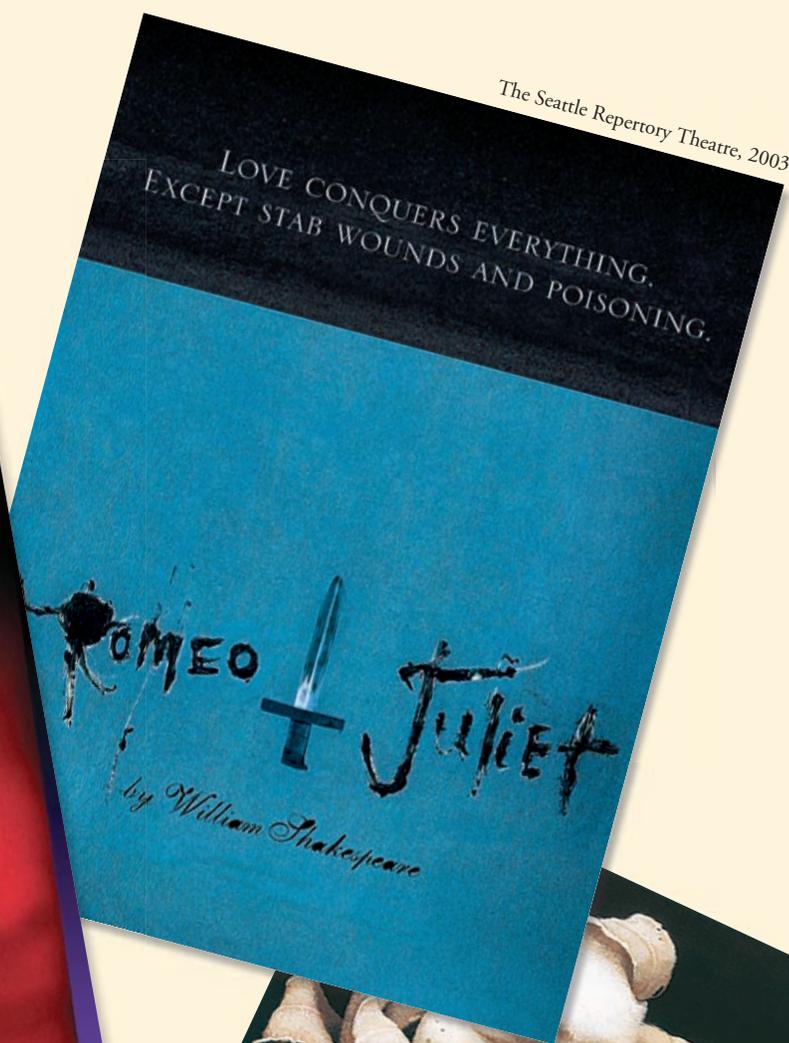
**Lady Capulet.** Good night.  
Get thee to bed and rest, for thou hast need.

[*Exeunt Lady Capulet and Nurse.*]

**Juliet.** Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.  
15 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.  
Nurse!—What should she do here?  
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.

**17–19** In her fear, Juliet starts to call the nurse back but realizes that she must be alone to drink the poison.

## Behind the Curtain



### Promotion

Imagine that you knew nothing about the story of the star-crossed lovers. What clues about the play do each of these **promotional** posters provide? Which poster would most make you want to see the play? Explain your answers.

20 Come, vial.  
 What if this mixture do not work at all?  
 Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?  
 No, no! This shall forbid it. Lie thou there.  
*[lays down a dagger]*  
 What if it be a poison which the friar  
 25 Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,  
 Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored  
 Because he married me before to Romeo?  
 I fear it is; and yet methinks it should not,  
 For he hath still been tried a holy man. **E**  
 30 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!  
 Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,  
 To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
 35 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?  
 Or, if I live, is it not very like  
 The horrible conceit of death and night,  
 Together with the terror of the place—  
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle  
 40 Where for this many hundred years the bones  
 Of all my buried ancestors are packed;  
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,  
 Lies fest'ring in his shroud; where, as they say,  
 At some hours in the night spirits resort—  
 45 Alack, alack, is it not like that I,  
 So early waking—what with loathsome smells,  
 And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,  
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad—  
 O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,  
 50 Environed with all these hideous fears,  
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints,  
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,  
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone  
 As with a club dash out my desp'rate brains?  
 55 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!  
 Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.  
*[She drinks and falls upon her bed within the curtains.]*

**23 This shall forbid it:** A dagger will be her alternative means of keeping from marrying Paris.

**24–57** Juliet lists her various doubts and fears about what she is about to do.

### **E CHARACTER**

In her anxious state, what does Juliet suspect about Friar Laurence's **motives** for giving her the potion? Do you think she really believes this to be true? Explain.

**36–43** Juliet fears the vision (**conceit**) she might have on waking in the family tomb and seeing the rotting body of Tybalt.

**45–54** She fears that the smells together with the sounds of ghosts screaming might make her lose her mind and commit bizarre acts. Mandrake root was thought to look like the human form and to scream when pulled from the ground.

**57 stay:** stop.

## 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 crowed,  
The curfew bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.

5 Look to the baked meats, good Angelica;  
Spare not for cost.

**Nurse.** Go, you cot-quean, go,  
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  
10 All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

**Lady Capulet.** Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your 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?

15 **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.

**Second Servant.** I have a head, sir, that will find out logs  
And never trouble Peter for the matter.

20 **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!

**2 pastry:** the room where baking is done.

**5 good Angelica:** In his happy mood, Capulet even calls the nurse by her name.

**6 cot-quean:** The nurse playfully refers to Capulet as a "cottage quean," or housewife. This is a joke about his doing women's work (arranging the party).

**11–13** Lord and Lady Capulet joke about his being a woman chaser (**mouse-hunt**) as a young man. He makes fun of her jealousy (**jealous hood**).

**20–23** 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 as well as a pun, since the servant is searching for drier logs. **straight:** right away.

[Reenter Nurse.]

25 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.]

## 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,  
5 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!  
10 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!  
Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!  
15 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!

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

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

**Lady Capulet.** O me, O me! My child, my only life!

20 Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!  
Help! help! Call help.

**1–11** The nurse chatters as she bustles around the room. She calls Juliet a **slugabed**, or sleepyhead, who is trying to get her **pennyworths**, or small portions, of 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.

**17 lamentable:** filled with grief.

[Enter Capulet.]

**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!

25 **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.

30 **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.]

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

28–29 What simile does Capulet use to describe what has happened to Juliet?

COMMON CORE L 4b

### Language Coach

**Derivations** Words formed from another word or base are **derivations**. The word *lamentable* (line 30) is derived from the base word *lament*, “to grieve.” What does *lamentable* mean? What other words are derived from this same word?



Friar Laurence and the Capulets mourn for Juliet in the University of Victoria's 1998 production.

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

35 O son, the night before thy wedding day  
 Hath death lain with thy wife. See, there she lies,  
 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

40 And leave him all. Life, living, all is Death's.

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

**Lady Capulet.** Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!  
 Most miserable hour that e'er time saw

45 In lasting labor of his pilgrimage!  
 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!  
 50 Most lamentable day, most woeful day  
 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!

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

60 Uncomfortable time, why camest thou now  
 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!

65 **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,

70 But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.  
 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?

75 O, in this love, you love your child so ill

**40 Life . . . Death's:** My life, my possessions, and everything else of mine belongs to Death.

**44–48 Most miserable . . . my sight:** This is the most miserable hour that time ever saw on its long journey. I had only one child to make me happy, and Death has taken (**caught**) her from me.

**55 beguiled:** tricked.

**60–61 why . . . solemnity:** Why did Death have to come to murder our celebration?

**65–78** 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.

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  
80 On this fair corse, and, as the custom is,  
In all her best array bear her to church;  
For though fond nature bids us all lament,  
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.

**Capulet.** All things that we ordained festival  
85 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;  
90 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.  
The heavens do lower upon you for some ill;  
95 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,  
For well you know this is a pitiful case.

[*Exit.*]

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

[*Enter* Peter.]

100 **Peter.** Musicians, oh, musicians, “Heart’s ease, heart’s ease.” Oh,  
an you will have me live, play “Heart’s 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.

105 **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.

**79–80 stick . . . corse:** Put rosemary, an herb, on her corpse.

**82–83 though . . . merriment:** Though it's natural to cry, common sense tells us we should rejoice for the dead.

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

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

**94–95 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).

**F PUN**

Reread lines 96–99. The musician is talking about the case for his instrument. What “case” is the nurse referring to?

**100–138** 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, or a **dump**, a slow dance melody. They refuse to play, 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 on notes of the musical scale, re and fa.

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

110 **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.

**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?

113 **pate:** top of the head.

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

**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:

120       “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?

125 **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?

130 **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.

135       “Then music with her silver sound  
          With speedy help doth lend redress.”

[*Exit.*]

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

136 **pestilent:** bothersome; irritating.

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

[*Exeunt.*]

## Comprehension

- 1. Recall** What reason does Paris give for Lord Capulet's decision to move up the wedding?
- 2. Recall** At first, what does Juliet believe is the only solution to her problem?
- 3. Summarize** What plan does Friar Laurence devise for Juliet, and what reservations does Juliet have about this plan?

## Text Analysis

- 4. Reading Shakespearean Drama** Review the events you recorded as you read Act Four, and think about how the characters' interactions drive the plot forward. If the nurse had accompanied Juliet to Friar Laurence's cell, do you think Juliet would have made a different decision? Explain.
- 5. Make Judgments** Do you feel sympathy for the Capulets, the nurse, and Paris when they express grief over Juliet's death? Why or why not?
- 6. Identify Dramatic Irony** Dramatic irony exists when the reader or viewer knows something that one or more of the characters do not. Find three examples of dramatic irony in Act Four and record them in a chart like the one shown. Then explain how these ironic moments contribute to the building tension in the play.

Scene and Lines	Dramatic Irony
Scene 1, lines 24–28	Paris asks Juliet to confess to Friar Laurence that she loves him, and Juliet carefully avoids denying it. We know that Juliet loves Romeo, not Paris.

- 7. Recognize Protagonist and Antagonist** If Romeo and Juliet are the protagonists of this play, who or what is the antagonist? Keep in mind that an antagonist can be a character, a group of characters, a set of circumstances, or even society as a whole. Use details from the play to support your answer.
- 8. Evaluate Comic Relief** The humorous exchange between Peter and the musicians at the end of Act Four is an example of comic relief. It lightens the mood after the grief-filled speeches that follow the discovery of Juliet's body. If you were producing a stage or film version of *Romeo and Juliet*, would you cut this passage, or do you think it serves an important purpose? Explain.

## Text Criticism

- 9. Different Perspectives** How might older and younger audiences differ in their assessment of Romeo's and Juliet's actions? Explain your opinion, citing specific actions and interactions in the play.

### COMMON CORE

**RL 3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.  
**RL 10** Read and comprehend dramas. **L 3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. **L 5a** Interpret figures of speech and analyze their role in the text.