

Benvolio fears meeting the Capulets, knowing a fight will surely follow. Mercutio laughs at his fears, accusing Benvolio of being a quick-tempered quarreller.

Themes

Public versus private (in small groups)

Act 2 ended with the intense intimacy of Romeo and Juliet's secret marriage plans. In contrast, Shakespeare sets the opening of Act 3 in a very public place. Just like at the start of the play, the characters are in the open air and the tension is building. Benvolio fears that a meeting with the Capulets will spark another street fight: the weather is hot and the 'mad blood stirring'.

- Read quickly through the next few pages to get a sense of what happens. Then talk together about where you would set this scene if you were filming it. Although Shakespeare notionally locates the play in Verona, Italy, you have free choice. In what country would you shoot it? What kind of outdoor space would you choose? Give your production designer some ideas to work with.
- Discuss why Shakespeare might have emphasised the contrast between events that take place in public and those that occur in private. Fill in a table marked 'Public Action' and 'Private Action' with information from Acts 1 and 2. What similarities or differences do you notice between the kinds of action that take place in these two different arenas? Annotate the table with your answer.

1 To fight or not to fight? (in threes)

- Mercutio (who is probably describing his own behaviour rather than Benvolio's), gives five examples of Benvolio getting into arguments (lines 15–25). Every quarrel was caused by something trivial. Work out some actions that Mercutio might use to accompany each quarrel. For example, does he pat Benvolio's chin for the first?
- Take parts as Benvolio, Mercutio and Tybalt. Have a go at staging the episode directly after Tybalt's entrance up to line 48. Speak and act in a style that matches what you know of these characters. Remember that Benvolio has played the peacekeeper in previous scenes. Do you think he is still looking to avoid trouble?

Capels Capulets
are abroad are about
scape escape

claps me throws
operation effect
draws him on attacks
drawer barman
hot fierce
moody angry

meat food
as addle as an egg
like a rotten egg

doublet tight jacket
riband ribbon
tutor me from try to talk
me out of
apt ready
fee-simple legal ownership
(Benvolio's statement that if he
were as quick to pick a quarrel
as Mercutio, he wouldn't last
long, ominously forecasts
Mercutio's death)

Act 3 Scene 1

Verona, a public place

Enter MERCUTIO and his PAGE, BENVOLIO, and MEN.

- BENVOLIO I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire:
The day is hot, the Capels are abroad,
And if we meet we shall not scape a brawl,
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring;
- MERCUTIO Thou art like one of these fellows that, when he enters the
confines of a tavern, claps me his sword upon the table, and says
'God send me no need of thee!'; and by the operation of the second
cup draws him on the drawer, when indeed there is no need. 5
- BENVOLIO Am I like such a fellow?
- MERCUTIO Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in
Italy, and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be
moved. 10
- BENVOLIO And what to?
- MERCUTIO Nay, and there were two such, we should have none shortly,
for one would kill the other. Thou? why, thou wilt quarrel with
a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou
hast; thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other
reason but because thou hast hazel eyes. What eye but such an eye
would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as
an egg is full of meat, and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle 15
as an egg for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrelled with a man for
coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath
lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for
wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another for tying his
new shoes with old riband? and yet thou wilt tutor me from
quarrelling? 20
- BENVOLIO And I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should
buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.
- MERCUTIO The fee-simple? O simple! 25

Mercutio taunts Tybalt, but Tybalt ignores his insults, because he is seeking Romeo. However, Romeo refuses to accept Tybalt's challenge to fight and tries to placate him, much to Mercutio's disgust.

Write about it

Romeo's point of view

When Romeo arrives (line 48) and looks around, what does he make of what he sees? His mind is probably racing as he understands the dangerous situation developing. Don't forget that Romeo is now a married man – the last thing he wants is a fight, especially with Tybalt (a Capulet, like Juliet). Should he get involved?

- In role as Romeo, write a few paragraphs in modern English weighing up your options and considering the consequences of stepping in.

Language in the play

Mercutio's wordplay as a weapon (in pairs)

- Mercutio can't help twisting language into insults against Tybalt. In the lines between Tybalt's arrival and Romeo's entrance, he tries at least four times to bat Tybalt's language back at him with attitude! Practise reading aloud Mercutio's lines and then record them in a way that you think reflects how Mercutio feels about Tybalt.
- At line 49, Tybalt says that Romeo is the man he intends to fight. Mercutio, who has already made double meanings out of Tybalt's 'consortest', now pretends that 'man' means servant or 'follower'. He says Romeo will never wear the uniform of Tybalt's servants. Only if Tybalt invites Romeo to meet at a duelling place ('field') will Romeo be Tybalt's 'man'. Explain clearly to a partner how Mercutio uses his lines 50–2 to try to insult Tybalt – and why Tybalt might take offence. Record your ideas in your Character file on Mercutio.

1 'be satisfied' (in groups of four or more)

Line 65 is an electric moment in the play. Tybalt has deeply insulted Romeo ('villain', 'boy'). But because he is now married to Juliet, Romeo wants only to make peace with Tybalt, who is now one of his family. Everyone on stage will react dramatically to Romeo's two words.

- Prepare a tableau to show all characters at the moment when Romeo says 'be satisfied'. Hold the frozen moment for thirty seconds. Other groups identify who's who in your tableau. Then allow each member to come to life and speak the precise thoughts in their character's head at that moment.

and ... occasion if you give me cause

consortest are friends with

Consort play music with

minstrels hired musicians (insulting to high-born Mercutio)

fiddlestick sword

'Zounds by Christ's wounds (an oath)

livery servants' uniform

Your worship your honour (meant ironically)

appertaining appropriate

devise guess

tender value

Enter TYBALT, PETRUCHIO, and others.

- BENVOLIO By my head, here comes the Capulets. 30
- MERCUTIO By my heel, I care not.
- TYBALT Follow me close, for I will speak to them.
Gentlemen, good den, a word with one of you.
- MERCUTIO And but one word with one of us? couple it with something, make it a word and a blow. 35
- TYBALT You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, and you will give me occasion.
- MERCUTIO Could you not take some occasion without giving?
- TYBALT Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.
- MERCUTIO Consort? what, dost thou make us minstrels? And thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick, here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort! 40
- BENVOLIO We talk here in the public haunt of men:
Either withdraw unto some private place,
Or reason coldly of your grievances, 45
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.
- MERCUTIO Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze;
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

Enter ROMEO.

- TYBALT Well, peace be with you, sir, here comes my man.
- MERCUTIO But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery. 50
Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower;
Your worship in that sense may call him man.
- TYBALT Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford
No better term than this: thou art a villain.
- ROMEO Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee 55
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting. Villain am I none;
Therefore farewell, I see thou knowest me not.
- TYBALT Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
That thou hast done me, therefore turn and draw. 60
- ROMEO I do protest I never injured thee,
But love thee better than thou canst devise,
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love;
And so, good Capulet, which name I tender 65
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.
- MERCUTIO O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!

Mercutio, angered by Romeo's refusal to fight, challenges Tybalt. Romeo tries to make peace, but his intervention is fatal for Mercutio, who, mortally wounded, curses Montagues and Capulets alike.

Characters

Mercutio: always the joker? (in pairs)

- Even though he knows he is about die, Mercutio continues to make jokes: 'Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.' One person reads all of Mercutio's lines in the script opposite, but stops at the end of each sentence. The other person says to whom the sentence is probably spoken, and describes Mercutio's tone of voice (mocking, angry, serious and so on).
- Mercutio's last two words in the play ('Your houses!') suggest that he blames the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets for his impending death. Fatally wounded, he leaves with Benvolio; we do not see him again. Imagine that Mercutio is able to speak more to Benvolio before he dies. What would he say about the way things have turned out? Talk about likely topics (Romeo's refusal to fight? Tybalt's escape? His own misfortune?) and then write Mercutio's additional lines. Use modern English if you wish.

Stagecraft

Mercutio's final moments (in small groups)

In every production, the director and actors have to decide how to play lines 82–99. For example, exactly when do Mercutio's friends realise that he isn't joking, merely scratched, but mortally wounded?

- Talk together about how you think this part of the scene should be played. What kind of performance will have the greatest effect on the audience? Afterwards, take roles (as director, Mercutio, Benvolio, Romeo and others) and stage your version.

'Alla stoccata' rapier thrust
(Tybalt's nickname?)

dry-beat thrash without drawing
blood (with his bare hands)

pilcher scabbard

'passado' thrust

forbear stop

bandying fighting

sped done for; killed
hath nothing is unhurt

villain fellow (Elizabethans often
used 'villain' to address servants;
it was not a term of abuse in this
context – unlike the use in
lines 54, 57 and 92)

peppered dead

book of arithmetic
rule book (see p. 70)

A plague a'both your houses
curses on both Montagues
and Capulets

'Alla stoccata' carries it away. [Draws.]

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

TYBALT What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives that I mean to make bold withal, and as you shall use me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight. Will you pluck your sword out of his pilcher by the ears? Make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out. 70

TYBALT I am for you. [Drawing.] 75

ROMEO Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

MERCUTIO Come, sir, your 'passado'.

[They fight.]

ROMEO Draw, Benvolio, beat down their weapons.

Gentlemen, for shame forbear this outrage!

Tybalt, Mercutio, the Prince expressly hath

Forbid this bandying in Verona streets. 80

[Romeo steps between them.]

Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

[Tybalt under Romeo's arm thrusts Mercutio in.]

Away Tybalt [with his followers]

MERCUTIO I am hurt.

A plague a'both houses! I am sped.

Is he gone and hath nothing?

BENVOLIO What, art thou hurt?

MERCUTIO Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch, marry, 'tis enough. 85

Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

[Exit Page]

ROMEO Courage, man, the hurt cannot be much.

MERCUTIO No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague a'both your houses! 'Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic. Why the dev'l came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. 90

ROMEO I thought all for the best. 95

MERCUTIO Help me into some house, Benvolio,

Or I shall faint. A plague a'both your houses!

They have made worms' meat of me. I have it,

And soundly too. Your houses!

Exit [with Benvolio]

Romeo, blaming himself for Mercutio's wound, and resentful of Tybalt's insults, fears that his love for Juliet has weakened his courage. Learning that Mercutio is dead, he vows to kill Tybalt, slays him, then flees.

Themes

Male pride and honour

Lines 105–6 suggest that Romeo is angry with himself for allowing Juliet's beauty to make him 'effeminate' and to diminish his bravery. Tybalt's slaughter of Mercutio seems to reawaken Romeo's 'manliness'.

- Study all Romeo's lines in the script opposite, then pick out words and phrases that strike you as belonging to a code of male pride and honour. Choose a visual image or symbol to represent the theme. Print or draw it at the centre of a spider diagram, then surround it with quotations and your own explanations of what each word or phrase reveals about Romeo and the world of the young men in the play.
- Tybalt re-enters at line 111, but Shakespeare gives him no words. Write a short aside in Shakespearean style for Tybalt to speak to the audience. How is he feeling? Remember, he has just fatally wounded Mercutio, and Benvolio describes him as 'furious'.
- How important do you think 'manliness' is for young men today? What modern examples of this quality can you think of? How do they compare with the ideals of manliness in the play?

Stagecraft

Staging the fight (in pairs)

In Zeffirelli's film of *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo pursues Tybalt and kills him in a savage brawl. There is a similarly vicious struggle in Baz Luhrmann's movie. Both versions were intended to show that violence lies just below Verona's glamorous surface appearance.

Should the fight be staged as a dignified, formal fencing match, rather like the illustrations on pages 94 and 221? Or should it be brutal, dirty and painful?

- Talk together about how Tybalt's death (lines 121–2) might be staged and decide on your version. Arrange the movements of the fight, but be very careful. The first rule of all stage-fighting is that no one must be hurt. Try everything out in slow motion first.
- As you run through your final version, think about adding a 'soundscape' to the actions. What kinds of 'non-language' noises will accompany your actors' movements? What kind of music?

ally relative
very dear

temper character
softened valour's steel
weakened my bravery

aspired risen up to
untimely prematurely
black fate evil outcomes
on moe ... depend
lie in the future

respective lenity
respectful mildness

above our heads
on the way to heaven

Staying waiting

consort associate with

doom thee death sentence you
to death

fortune's fool the plaything of
chance or fate

ROMEO AND JULIET ACT 3 SCENE I

ROMEO This gentleman, the Prince's near ally,
My very friend, hath got this mortal hurt
In my behalf; my reputation stained
With Tybalt's slander – Tybalt, that an hour
Hath been my cousin. O sweet Juliet,
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
And in my temper softened valour's steel! 100

Enter Benvolio.

BENVOLIO O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead.
That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.
ROMEO This day's black fate on moe days doth depend,
This but begins the woe others must end. 110

[Enter Tybalt.]

BENVOLIO Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.
ROMEO Again, in triumph, and Mercutio slain?
Away to heaven, respective lenity,
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!
Now, Tybalt, take the 'villain' back again
That late thou gavest me, for Mercutio's soul
Is but a little way above our heads,
Staying for thine to keep him company:
Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.
TYBALT Thou wretched boy, that didst consort him here,
Shalt with him hence. 115

ROMEO This shall determine that.
They fight; Tybalt falls.

BENVOLIO Romeo, away, be gone!
The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.
Stand not amazed, the Prince will doom thee death
If thou art taken. Hence be gone, away!
ROMEO O, I am fortune's fool. 120

BENVOLIO Why dost thou stay?

Exit Romeo

Enter Citizens [as OFFICERS of the Watch].

OFFICER Which way ran he that killed Mercutio?
Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?



Lady Capulet demands that Romeo must die. Her demand for Montague blood reveals the depth of hatred between the two families. Benvolio tells the story of how Mercutio and Tybalt died.

1 Lady Capulet grieves for Tybalt

Lady Capulet's words suggest extreme emotion as she mourns over Tybalt and calls for Romeo's death. However, she has been absent from the play for some time, and the audience may need to reconnect with this character. How would you increase the dramatic impact of her words and add power to her display of grief?

- In your Director's Journal, write bullet points of advice to an actor playing Lady Capulet on how to deliver her five lines opposite (think about tone, expressions, actions, and so on).

Write about it

What happened in the fight?

You are one of the Officers of the Watch – the force of law and order in Verona. The Prince charges you with the task of writing up clearly and objectively an official account of the brawl.

- Use material from the first 127 lines of the scene to construct your formal report of what has happened. Then consider Benvolio as a material witness. Use lines 133–66 as his witness statement.
- Compare your own account of the fight with Benvolio's version. How closely do they match? Produce a final version for the Prince, in which you explain clearly how you have conflated the two accounts to arrive at the definitive report.

Language in the play

Imagery: a sword by any other name (in small groups)

Benvolio uses metaphors in place of 'swords' and 'sword-fighting': 'piercing steel' (line 150); 'deadly point to point' (line 151); 'Cold death' (line 153); 'fatal points' (line 157); 'envious thrust' (line 159).

- Suggest a few other such images for a sword, then try to come up with one or two reasons why Shakespeare has Benvolio use such metaphors in his account of the brawl.
- Take any everyday object (such as a mobile phone or a pen) and make up similarly vivid metaphors to represent it. (See pp. 214–15 in the 'Language' section for more information.)

fray affray, dispute
discover reveal
manage progress

spoke him fair was courteous to Tybalt
bethink reflect
nice trivial
unruly spleen fiery anger (Elizabethans thought anger came from the spleen)
tilts thrusts

martial warlike

dexterity nimbleness
Retorts returns

stout brave

entertained thought about

BENVOLIO	There lies that Tybalt.	
OFFICER	Up, sir, go with me; I charge thee in the Prince's name obey.	130
	<i>Enter PRINCE, old MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their WIVES, and all.</i>	
PRINCE	Where are the vile beginners of this fray?	
BENVOLIO	O noble Prince, I can discover all The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl; There lies the man, slain by young Romeo, That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.	135
LADY CAPULET	Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child! O Prince! O husband! O, the blood is spilled Of my dear kinsman. Prince, as thou art true, For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.	140
	O cousin, cousin!	
PRINCE	Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?	
BENVOLIO	Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay. Romeo, that spoke him fair, bid him bethink How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal Your high displeasure; all this, utterèd With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed, Could not take truce with the unruly spleen Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast, Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point, And with a martial scorn, with one hand beats Cold death aside, and with the other sends It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity Retorts it. Romeo he cries aloud, 'Hold, friends! friends, part!' and swifter than his tongue, His agile arm beats down their fatal points, And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled; But by and by comes back to Romeo, Who had but newly entertained revenge, And to't they go like lightning, for, ere I Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain;	145 150 155 160

Lady Capulet, accusing Benvolio of lying, again demands Romeo's death. But Prince Escalus orders that, for killing Tybalt, Romeo will be banished from Verona.

1 Ending in rhyme (in pairs)

The scene ends with all the speeches in the script opposite spoken in rhyme.

- Do you think the actors should emphasise the rhymes? Decide by thinking about and then discussing what such emphasis would contribute to the closing dramatic atmosphere of the scene. Try it out!

Write about it

Storyboard the action

- Imagine you are going to produce a photo-strip of the action in this scene. Before you begin your photoshoot, plan exactly what images you want to include. Don't be too ambitious: consider about ten frames.
- Draw your storyboard template and sketch in an outline of your selected shots. Make sure you include notes for each photo that clearly identify what you intend each one to show. Then write a caption for each photo, using your own words and a quotation from the script.
- Have a go at shooting your version, using classmates as the actors.

Affection love (for Romeo)

interest (because Mercutio was my kinsman)

hearts' proceeding
emotional actions (bloody brawling)

My blood Mercutio, the Prince's relative

amerce punish

purchase out make amends for; excuse

Mercy but ... kill
showing mercy to murderers results in further murders

And as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

165

LADY CAPULET He is a kinsman to the Montague,
Affection makes him false, he speaks not true:
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
And all those twenty could but kill one life.
I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must give:
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

170

PRINCE Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio;
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

MONTAGUE Not Romeo, Prince, he was Mercutio's friend;
His fault concludes but what the law should end,
The life of Tybalt.

175

PRINCE And for that offence
Immediately we do exile him hence.
I have an interest in your hearts' proceeding:
My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;
But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine
That you shall all repent the loss of mine.
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses,
Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses:
Therefore use none. Let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he is found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence this body, and attend our will:
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.

180

185

Exeunt

▼ The death of Tybalt. Choose a line from Act 3 Scene 1 as a suitable caption for this image.



Juliet, unaware of the murderous events of the day, and filled with love for Romeo, longs for the night to come. She thinks of Romeo, after her death, as like a star in the night sky.

1 Juliet longs for the night (in small groups)

Juliet passionately reveals the depth of her longing for Romeo. Critics call her thirty-one lines an *epithalamium* or wedding song. Use the following activities to help you experience and understand her feelings.

- a An insight into Juliet's mind** Sit closely together. One person quietly reads the speech. On the first read-through, the others echo aloud all words that seem to be commands. On the second, echo words concerned with speed or haste (e.g. 'Gallop', 'fiery-footed', 'whip', and so on). On the final read-through, echo all words connected with night or darkness. Afterwards, talk together about how the patterns created by such words convey what Juliet is thinking and feeling.
- b Trouble ahead?** Although Juliet is incredibly happy as she awaits her wedding night, her soliloquy contains at least three references to death: the image of the youthful, headstrong Phaëton; her own death; and her imagining of Romeo's body in the heavens. Find these quotations in the script opposite, write them down and explain what they add to the overall mood of Juliet's soliloquy.
- c Embarrassing?** Juliet is only thirteen but some lines of her speech are quite sexual. In previous centuries, some productions even cut these lines. Identify the words and phrases you think might prove challenging for an actor playing Juliet. As director, write advice for her.

Stagecraft

The setting for Juliet's speech

Most productions set this speech in the intimacy of Juliet's bedroom, but the picture here shows a different idea.

- What do you think the director had in mind in this production? What ideas do you have for different settings?



Gallop ... steeds move quickly, horses that pull the sun (god's chariot) across the sky

Phoebus' lodging the west (where the sun sets)

Phaëton the son of Phoebus (the sun god); he drove the horses pulling his father's chariot (the sun) so recklessly that Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt

close concealing

That ... wink no one can be certain what this means and over forty different interpretations have been suggested; what do you think?

civil sombre

learn teach

stainless innocent

Hood ... in my cheeks an untrained hawk, unused to men ('unmanned'), fluttered its wings ('bating') until it was 'hooded' with a black cap (or 'mantle') (see p. 60)

strange love grow bold innocent love becomes confident

garish brash

Act 3 Scene 2

Juliet's room in Capulet's mansion

Enter JULIET alone.

JULIET

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging; such a waggoner
As Phaëton would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing Night,
That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen:
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties, or if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil Night,
Thou sober-suited matron all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.
Hood my unmanned blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle, till strange love grow bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, Night, come, Romeo, come, thou day in night,
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night,
Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.
Come, gentle Night, come, loving, black-browed Night,
Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possessed it, and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them. O, here comes my Nurse,

Juliet, alarmed by the Nurse's mourning for Tybalt's death, thinks that Romeo has died. She wishes that she too could die, and lie beside Romeo in death.

Language in the play

'I', 'ay' and 'eyes' (in pairs)

Elizabethans not only enjoyed joking puns (of which Mercutio was a master), but also appreciated them in tragic situations. In lines 45–52, Juliet and the Nurse repeatedly use one vowel sound: 'I'. However, this repetitive wordplay can appear forced and contrived to a modern audience at such a serious moment in the play.

- Read the lines aloud to each other, in any manner you think appropriate. Then talk about the challenges of creating just the right mood in performance. Listen to other pairs and find out whether they identified the same challenges.

Themes

Death

In line 59, Juliet wishes that her body ('Vile earth') should be buried ('to earth resign'), ending her life ('end motion here'). Between lines 36 and 60, Shakespeare repeatedly uses words that stress the theme of death and suffering in the play.

- Catch the mood of this part of the scene by looking through the lines and picking out just one word from each line that emphasises death or disaster. How many lines lack such words?
- Write down your chosen words, then compare your choices with those of other students. Talk together about how these words add to the atmosphere of this passage.

1 Ask the Nurse ... and Juliet (in pairs)

It is only at line 69 that the Nurse lets Juliet know that she has been talking about Tybalt's death, not Romeo's. Why does the Nurse mislead Juliet for so long?

- One of you plays the Nurse, in the hot-seat. The other person asks her about her actions here.
- Afterwards, change roles and put Juliet in the hot-seat. How does she feel about what the Nurse has just put her through? Is she angry or just relieved to discover that Romeo is unharmed?

corde rope ladder

weraday alas

envious spiteful

cockatrice the basilisk, a legendary beast; half snake, half cockerel, its stare could kill

weal welfare, joy

corse corpse

gore blood congealed blood

sounded swooned

bankrout bankrupt (Juliet has lost her 'investment of love' in Romeo)

Vile earth i.e. Juliet's body

press ... bier lie together in death

so contrary in such an opposite direction

ROMEO AND JULIET ACT 3 SCENE 2

Enter NURSE, with [the ladder of] cords [in her lap].

And she brings news, and every tongue that speaks
But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.
Now, Nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the cords
That Romeo bid thee fetch?

NURSE

Ay, ay, the cords.

35

[Throws them down.]

JULIET

Ay me, what news? Why dost thou wring thy hands?

NURSE

Ah weraday, he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!

We are undone, lady, we are undone.

Alack the day, he's gone, he's killed, he's dead!

JULIET

Can heaven be so envious?

NURSE

Romeo can,

40

Though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo!

Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!

JULIET

What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?

This torture should be roared in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but 'ay',

45

And that bare vowel 'I' shall poison more

Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice.

I am not I, if there be such an 'ay',

Or those eyes shut, that makes thee answer 'ay'.

If he be slain, say 'ay', or if not, 'no':

50

Brief sounds determine my weal or woe.

NURSE

I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes

(God save the mark!), here on his manly breast:

A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse,

Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood,

55

All in gore blood; I sounded at the sight.

JULIET

O break, my heart, poor bankrout, break at once!

To prison, eyes, ne'er look on liberty!

Vile earth, to earth resign, end motion here,

And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier!

60

NURSE

O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!

O courteous Tybalt, honest gentleman,

That ever I should live to see thee dead!

JULIET

What storm is this that blows so contrary?

Is Romeo slaughtered? and is Tybalt dead?

65

My dearest cousin, and my dearer lord?

Juliet learns that Tybalt is dead and Romeo banished. She begins to accuse Romeo of seeming beautiful but acting vilely, but then rebukes the Nurse for wishing shame on Romeo.

Language in the play

Appearance and reality (in small groups)

The theme of appearance versus reality is important in all Shakespeare's plays. Hearing that Romeo has killed Tybalt, Juliet uses oxymorons to lament that a beautiful appearance can hide an evil reality ('beautiful tyrant', 'damned saint', and so on). Romeo also uses oxymorons (see p. 14). The characters use antitheses to similar effect ('O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!', line 73).

- How many oxymorons and antitheses can you count in lines 73–85? Add them to the 'Antithesis' section of your Language file.
- Choose one antithesis or oxymoron and prepare a tableau involving every member of the group. Each group shows its tableau. The other groups guess which oxymorons or antitheses are being portrayed. Afterwards, display all the examples you have used imaginatively on a whole-class poster.

1 What does the Nurse think about men? (in pairs)

- Identify the seven things the Nurse says about men in lines 85–7. What do they have in common?
- Talk together about possible reasons why Shakespeare gives her such a list at this point in the play. Is it because of what she has experienced in Verona? Don't be afraid to speculate about her reasons. You'll find it helpful to talk about each characteristic in turn ('no trust', 'No faith', and so on).

► What effect do the revelations in this scene have on Juliet?



the general doom doomsday, the end of the world (sounded by the last trumpet)

keep guard

Despisèd ... show loathsome reality of heavenly appearance

justly precisely

bower enclose

perjured liars

forsworn promise breakers

naught wicked, vicious

dissemblers hypocrites

aqua-vitae brandy

chide at criticise

tributary drops
tears of tribute

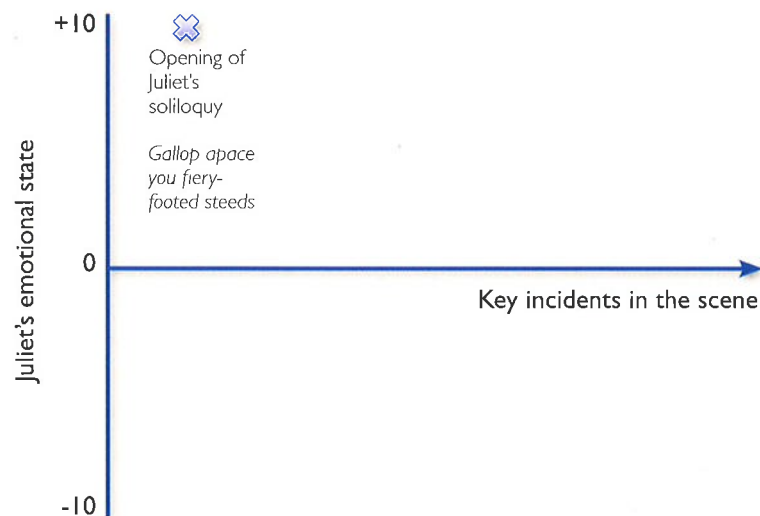
- Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom,
For who is living, if those two are gone?
- NURSE Tybalt is gone and Romeo banishèd,
Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd. 70
- JULIET O God, did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?
- NURSE It did, it did, alas the day, it did!
- JULIET O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical! 75
Dove-feathered raven, wolvish-ravens lamb!
Despisèd substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damned saint, an honourable villain!
O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend 80
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter
So fairly bound? O that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!
- NURSE There's no trust, 85
No faith, no honesty in men, all perjured,
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.
Ah, where's my man? Give me some aqua-vitae;
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
Shame come to Romeo!
- JULIET Blistered be thy tongue 90
For such a wish! he was not born to shame:
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crowned
Sole monarch of the universal earth.
O what a beast was I to chide at him! 95
- NURSE Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?
- JULIET Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,
When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?
But wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin? 100
That villain cousin would have killed my husband.
Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring,
Your tributary drops belong to woe,
Which you mistaking offer up to joy.

Juliet is devastated by the thought of Romeo's banishment. She threatens to kill herself. But she is cheered by the Nurse's promise to find Romeo and send him to her bedchamber that night.

1 Juliet's emotional rollercoaster (in pairs)

Throughout this scene, Juliet's feelings fluctuate rapidly.

- Consider the whole scene. Together, draw a mood graph similar to the one pictured below. First, establish what you think is Juliet's 'normal' emotional state. Then split the scene into key 'episodes' and allocate each one a number (+10 for extreme happiness; -10 for deep distress).
- Plot the episodes on the graph. Tag each point on the graph to a key quotation. What do you notice when you connect up all the points?
- Pin the final version to the wall for others to look at. In what ways are the graphs similar or different?



Language in the play

Juliet's powerful language (in pairs)

Look through Juliet's words between line 97 and the end of the scene. She is absolutely devastated by the thought of Romeo's banishment, and her language reflects her mood.

- With a partner, note down the words and phrases that most powerfully express her feelings. For example, not for the first time, we hear Juliet *repeating* language that is very important to her. The word 'banishèd' is repeated five times. And in her final couplet, Juliet uses the language of chivalry ('my true knight'). Add your choices to these two examples, then explore some of the reasons why you think Juliet's language is so powerful and dramatic. Join up with other pairs to explain your thinking.

fain gladly

fellowship company (misfortune never comes alone)

needly of necessity

modern lamentation ordinary or usual grief

rear-ward final word

that word's death the power of that word to kill

sound truly express

beguiled deceived, cheated

maidenhead virginity

Hie go at once

wot well know well

ROMEO AND JULIET ACT 3 SCENE 2

My husband lives that Tybalt would have slain, 105

And Tybalt's dead that would have slain my husband:

All this is comfort, wherefore weep I then?

Some word there was, worser than Tybalt's death,

That murdered me; I would forget it fain,

But O, it presses to my memory, 110

Like damnèd guilty deeds to sinners' minds:

'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo banishèd.'

That 'banishèd', that one word 'banishèd',

Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death

Was woe enough if it had ended there; 115

Or if sour woe delights in fellowship,

And needly will be ranked with other griefs,

Why followed not, when she said 'Tybalt's dead',

'Thy father' or 'thy mother', nay, or both,

Which modern lamentation might have moved? 120

But with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,

'Romeo is banishèd': to speak that word,

Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,

All slain, all dead. 'Romeo is banishèd!' 125

There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,

In that word's death, no words can that woe sound.

Where is my father and my mother, Nurse?

Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse.

Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

Wash they his wounds with tears? mine shall be spent, 130

When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.

Take up those cords. Poor ropes, you are beguiled,

Both you and I, for Romeo is exiled.

He made you for a highway to my bed,

But I, a maid, die maiden-widowèd. 135

Come, cords, come, Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed,

And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

Hie to your chamber. I'll find Romeo

To comfort you, I wot well where he is.

Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night. 140

I'll to him, he is hid at Lawrence's cell.

O find him! Give this ring to my true knight,

And bid him come to take his last farewell.

Exeunt

Friar Lawrence tells Romeo of the Prince's sentence: he is to be banished. The news appals Romeo. Life, for him, exists only in Verona with Juliet. Exile is the same as death.

Stagecraft

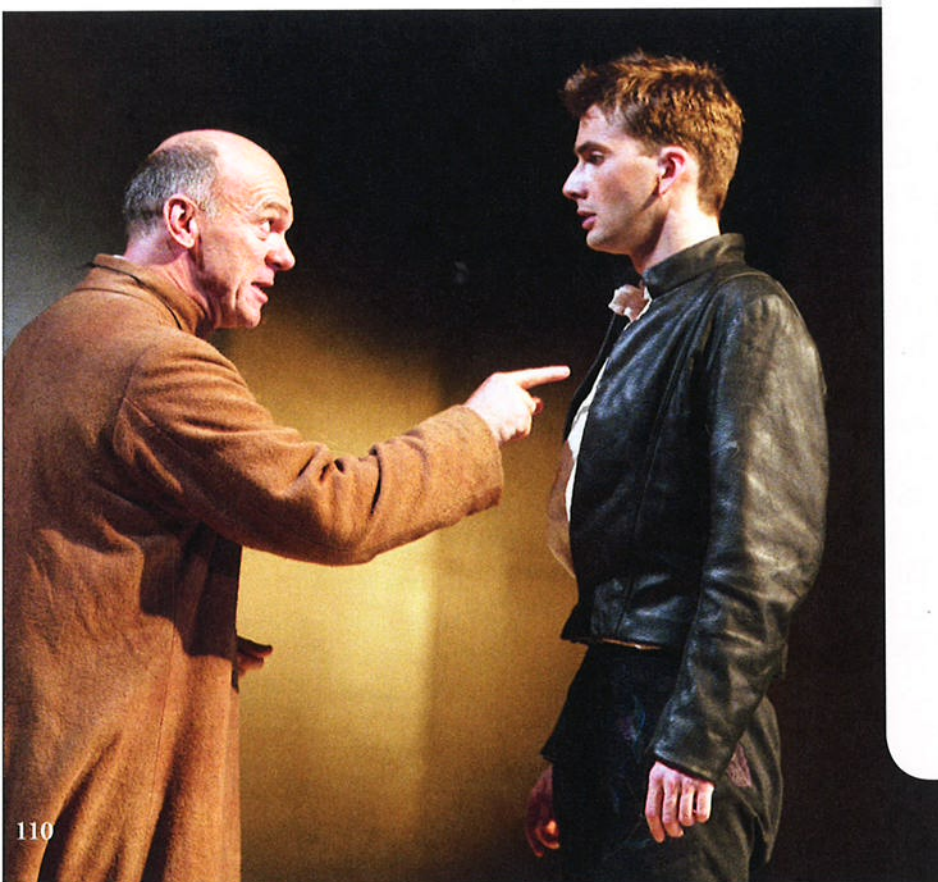
Romeo enters (in pairs)

Romeo is in hiding, having fled after killing Tybalt. One production showed him cowering under a table. The audience laughed as Friar Lawrence dragged him out.

- Do you think that was an appropriate 'entrance' for Romeo? One of you argues that it is; the other argues against that view. Which argument is the more convincing?
- Work together to decide how you would stage Romeo's entrance in order to reflect your understanding of his state of mind at this point in the play.

1 Romeo and the Friar

Read quickly through this scene to establish the way that Romeo and the Friar speak to and behave with each other. Then study the picture below and describe the kind of relationship depicted between the two men. How far do you think it is backed up by the text? Write thought bubbles for each character that fit the moment shown here.



fearful for Elizabethans, 'fearful' meant 'full of fear', 'terrible' or 'fatal'; do you think each meaning applies to Romeo?

enamoured of thy parts in love with every aspect of you

doom sentence

craves ... hand is trying to make friends with me

sour company sorrow

tidings news

vanished breathed

without outside

purgatory place where the dead suffered torment

mistermed wrongly named

Act 3 Scene 3

Friar Lawrence's cell

Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Romeo, come forth, come forth, thou fearful man:
Affliction is enamoured of thy parts,
And thou art wedded to calamity.

[Enter] ROMEO.

ROMEO Father, what news? What is the Prince's doom?
What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand,
That I yet know not? 5

FRIAR LAWRENCE Too familiar
Is my dear son with such sour company!
I bring thee tidings of the Prince's doom.

ROMEO What less than doomsday is the Prince's doom?

FRIAR LAWRENCE A gentler judgement vanished from his lips:
Not body's death, but body's banishment. 10

ROMEO Ha, banishment? be merciful, say 'death':
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death. Do not say 'banishment'!

FRIAR LAWRENCE Here from Verona art thou banishèd. 15

Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.
ROMEO There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself:
Hence 'banishèd' is banished from the world,
And world's exile is death; then 'banishèd' 20
Is death mistermed. Calling death 'banishèd',
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

Friar Lawrence condemns Romeo's ingratitude, and claims that the Prince is merciful. Romeo, distraught because banishment will mean he can no longer be with Juliet, refuses to be comforted.

Language in the play

Audiences – then and now

Once again, Shakespeare has written lines that his Elizabethan audiences enjoyed, but that modern audiences are likely to find strange or artificial. When Romeo talks of 'every cat and dog / And little mouse' being able to look on Juliet (lines 30–1), and flies being able to kiss her (lines 35–7), his words can sound bizarre today. But Elizabethans relished the comparisons and liked the punning ('Flies may do this, but I from this must fly'). Perhaps Shakespeare wrote the lines to highlight Romeo's immaturity. Or he may have written them to emphasise the depth of Romeo's grief, in which even the smallest, most trivial things are hugely important.

- What do you think of these ideas? Write down your reactions to them.
- The speech presents a challenge to the actor. So help Romeo by writing your advice on how he might speak lines 29–51 in your Director's Journal.

1 Is action better than thought? (in small groups)

'Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy'. Friar Lawrence argues that philosophy (thinking, reasoning) will comfort someone in adversity (beset by problems). Romeo angrily dismisses that advice ('Hang up philosophy!') because thinking without action is no help.

- Do you favour the Friar's argument or Romeo's? Take sides and argue your case. Use Romeo's situation, or examples from your own experience.

2 Is banishment better than death? (in small groups)

Friar Lawrence tells Romeo that he should be thankful that the 'kind Prince' has ignored the law of Verona, shown mercy and commuted the death sentence that he should have imposed on Romeo to banishment. But Romeo disagrees.

- Try a group reading of Romeo's lines 29–51, in which he speaks about the 'torture' of banishment. After a careful consideration of his arguments, discuss whether you think he is right to believe that banishment is far worse than death.

Thy fault ... death our law punishes your crime with death
rushed aside ignored

validity values

courtship courtly behaviour (or 'wooing')

carrion flies flies that feed on dead flesh

vestal virginal

sudden mean violent method

divine holy man

sin-absolver someone who forgives sins

mangle brutally destroy

fond foolish

Displant uproot

prevails triumphs

ROMEO AND JULIET ACT 3 SCENE 3

FRIAR LAWRENCE O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!

Thy fault our law calls death, but the kind Prince,
Taking thy part, hath rushed aside the law,
And turned that black word 'death' to 'banishment'.

25

ROMEO

This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not.
'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here
Where Juliet lives, and every cat and dog
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven, and may look on her,
But Romeo may not. More validity,
More honourable state, more courtship lives

30

In carrion flies than Romeo; they may seize
On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,
And steal immortal blessing from her lips,
Who even in pure and vestal modesty

35

Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin;
But Romeo may not, he is banishèd.

40

Flies may do this, but I from this must fly;
They are free men, but I am banishèd:

And sayest thou yet that exile is not death?

Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,

45

But 'banishèd' to kill me? 'Banishèd'?

O Friar, the damnèd use that word in hell;

Howling attends it. How hast thou the heart,

Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,

A sin-absolver, and my friend professed,

50

To mangle me with that word 'banishèd'?

FRIAR LAWRENCE Thou fond mad man, hear me a little speak.

ROMEO O thou wilt speak again of banishment.

FRIAR LAWRENCE I'll give thee armour to keep off that word:

Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,

55

To comfort thee though thou art banishèd.

ROMEO

Yet 'banishèd'? Hang up philosophy!

Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,

Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom,

It helps not, it prevails not; talk no more.

60

FRIAR LAWRENCE O then I see that mad men have no ears.

ROMEO How should they when that wise men have no eyes?

Romeo, bewailing all that's happened, falls weeping to the ground and ignores the Friar's pleas to stand up. The Nurse arrives and also begs him to stand.

1 Can the Friar understand? (in fours)

Romeo accuses the Friar (who has taken a vow never to have a relationship with a woman) of not being able to understand how a young person in love feels: 'Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel' (line 64).

Does Romeo have a point? Can a celibate priest (or person) ever really understand what it's like to love another human being? Take sides and present your arguments for and against.

2 Action-packed language (in pairs)

Friar Lawrence's lines 74–80 show his agitation as he responds to the repeated knocking.

In pairs, one person reads the Friar's lines. The other accompanies them with gestures and actions. Change roles and repeat the exercise. How can you fill these seven lines with tension and uncertainty?

Language in the play

Is the Nurse being sexual? (in pairs)

Some people feel uncomfortable because, even at this serious moment, the Nurse uses words with sexual double meanings ('case', 'stand', 'rise', 'O').

- In pairs, discuss whether you think the Nurse is aware of the double meanings of her words. Give a reason for your answer.

Characters

Do you feel sorry for Romeo? (in small groups)

- Read Romeo's lines 64–70 quietly around your group several times. Write down a list of the things that Romeo says have happened to him.
- Romeo reaches breaking point and falls to the floor. Talk in your group about whether you think he is being immature and melodramatic, or whether he deserves genuine sympathy and understanding.
- After reading through the rest of the scene, return to this question. What does he go on to do and say that might affect your judgement about his behaviour?

dispute talk calmly

estate situation

Doting loving madly

Taking ... grave measuring out my future grave

infold shield

taken arrested

case condition (or genitals)

so deep an O such moaning

ROMEO AND JULIET ACT 3 SCENE 3

FRIAR LAWRENCE Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.

ROMEO Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.

Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,

An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,

Doting like me, and like me banishèd,

Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,

And fall upon the ground as I do now,

Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

Enter Nurse [within] and knock.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Arise, one knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.

ROMEO Not I, unless the breath of heart-sick groans

Mist-like infold me from the search of eyes.

Knock.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Hark how they knock! – Who's there? – Romeo, arise,

Thou wilt be taken. – Stay a while! – Stand up;

Loud knock.

Run to my study. – By and by! – God's will,

What simpleness is this? – I come, I come!

Knock.

Who knocks so hard? whence come you? what's your will?

NURSE [Within] Let me come in, and you shall know my errand:

I come from Lady Juliet.

FRIAR LAWRENCE Welcome then. [*Unlocks the door.*]

Enter NURSE.

NURSE O holy Friar, O tell me, holy Friar,

Where's my lady's lord? where's Romeo?

FRIAR LAWRENCE There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

NURSE O he is even in my mistress' case,

Just in her case. O woeful sympathy!

Piteous predicament! even so lies she,

Blubb'ring and weeping, weeping and blubb'ring.

Stand up, stand up, stand, and you be a man;

For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand;

Why should you fall into so deep an O?

On hearing the Nurse tell of Juliet's sorrow, Romeo tries to stab himself. The Nurse seizes his dagger and Friar Lawrence rebukes him for his suicide attempt.

1 More problems with a 'name' (in pairs)

Hearing of Juliet's sorrow, Romeo angrily condemns his own name and threatens to cut it from his body. His lines 102–7 echo those of Juliet in Act 2 Scene 2, lines 38–49.

- Turn back to that earlier speech and explore the relationship between these two sets of lines on 'names'. You could, for example, work on a dramatic presentation of the two speeches by 'intercutting' (interweaving) words and phrases from each one in order to highlight key similarities and differences.

Stagecraft

Who snatches the dagger? (in threes)

Some people believe that Shakespeare did not include the stage direction at line 108, but that the actor playing the Nurse added it. Would it make any difference if the Friar, rather than the Nurse, snatched the dagger from Romeo? For example, does being disarmed by a woman increase Romeo's sense of self-loathing?

- Decide how you would stage the 'snatch', then join up with two other students to have a go at acting it out.

Write about it

The Friar tells Romeo off (in pairs)

- Sharing the lines between you, speak the Friar's lines 108–34. They are a long condemnation of Romeo's attempt at suicide. Afterwards, select and write down only one or two words from each line – words you think will have most effect on Romeo. For each of your chosen words, explain why you think they will have a real impact on the young man.
- The Friar says that Romeo shames his good looks ('shape'), his declarations of love ('love') and his intelligence ('wit'). He's like a stingy money-lender ('usurer') because, although he possesses those excellent qualities in abundance, he doesn't use them properly. Read what the Friar says about each quality (lines 126–34), and then describe them in your own words.

blood removed ... own (Tybalt)

concealed lady secret wife

level aim

sack destroy

form body

ill-beseeming unnatural

tempered balanced

rail'st complain

usurer money lender

bedeck decorate

shape man's body

form of wax
waxwork, easily melted

Digressing deviating, or taking
away from

- ROMEO Nurse! [*He rises.*]
- NURSE Ah, sir, ah, sir, death's the end of all.
- ROMEO Spakest thou of Juliet? how is it with her?
Doth not she think me an old murderer,
Now I have stained the childhood of our joy
With blood removed but little from her own? 95
Where is she? and how doth she? and what says
My concealed lady to our cancelled love?
- NURSE O she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,
And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls, and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again. 100
- ROMEO As if that name,
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her, as that name's cursèd hand
Murdered her kinsman. O tell me, Friar, tell me, 105
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion.
[*He offers to stab himself, and Nurse snatches the dagger away.*]
- FRIAR LAWRENCE Hold thy desperate hand!
Art thou a man? thy form cries out thou art;
Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast. 110
Unseemly woman in a seeming man,
And ill-beseeming beast in seeming both,
Thou hast amazed me. By my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better tempered. 115
Hast thou slain Tybalt? wilt thou slay thyself,
And slay thy lady that in thy life lives,
By doing damnèd hate upon thyself?
Why rail'st thou on thy birth? the heaven and earth?
Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
In thee at once, which thou at once wouldst lose. 120
Fie, fie, thou sham'st thy shape, thy love, thy wit,
Which like a usurer abound'st in all,
And usest none in that true use indeed
Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit: 125
Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
Digressing from the valour of a man;

Friar Lawrence rebukes Romeo for his lack of love and intelligence. He reminds Romeo of his good fortune and plans how he can eventually be recalled from exile.

1 The Friar's long speech (in small groups)

The Friar's long speech (lines 108–58) has three sections. He first tells Romeo off, then tries to cheer him up, then sets out a plan of action.

The following activities will help your understanding of the speech.

- One person reads the Friar's lines aloud, pausing frequently. In each pause, everyone else mimes appropriate expressions and movements for what they have heard. Freeze occasionally for everyone to compare each other's actions. (You will find it fascinating to see the different ways of representing the same line or image.)
- The condemnation (lines 108–34). Take turns to speak this section, using a critical tone of voice.
- Cheering up Romeo (lines 135–45). Speak the section in a good-humoured, positive tone. Emphasise the repetitions of 'there art thou happy'. (But notice the section ends with three lines of criticism.)
- The Friar's plan (lines 146–58). One person slowly speaks the lines; the others act out what the Friar advises. Try to show every action he describes. Might the Friar hesitate as he thinks up different parts of his plan?

Write about it

Explaining the Friar's complicated plan

In lines 146–58, the Friar suggests an ambitious plan to help Romeo.

- Write a version of the Friar's ideas that a group of younger students studying Shakespeare could easily understand. Use pictures or drawings to help illustrate key points if it helps. Try to keep as much detail as possible from the original speech.

perjury oath-breaking, false promising

flask a container for gunpowder (the Friar compares Romeo's misused intelligence to a clumsy soldier accidentally killing himself)

wast ... dead just tried to kill yourself

happy lucky

mishavèd misbehaving

decreed agreed

Watch be set police come on duty (see 'Watch' on p. 182)

blaze announce

lamentation sorrow

apt unto liable to

chide tell me off (for killing Tybalt)

Thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,
Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish;
Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
Misshapen in the conduct of them both,
Like powder in a skillless soldier's flask,
Is set afire by thine own ignorance,
And thou dismembered with thine own defence.
What, rouse thee, man! thy Juliet is alive,
For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead:
There art thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,
But thou slewest Tybalt: there art thou happy.
The law that threatened death becomes thy friend,
And turns it to exile: there art thou happy.
A pack of blessings light upon thy back,
Happiness courts thee in her best array,
But like a mishavèd and sullen wench,
Thou pouts upon thy fortune and thy love:
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
Go get thee to thy love as was decreed,
Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her;
But look thou stay not till the Watch be set,
For then thou canst not pass to Mantua,
Where thou shalt live till we can find a time
To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back
With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.
Go before, Nurse, commend me to thy lady,
And bid her hasten all the house to bed,
Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto.
Romeo is coming.

NURSE

O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night
To hear good counsel. O, what learning is!
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

ROMEO

Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

[Nurse offers to go in, and turns again.]

NURSE

Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir.
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

ROMEO

How well my comfort is revived by this.

[Exit Nurse]



Friar Lawrence sends Romeo to Juliet, warning him to leave early for Mantua and await news. In Scene 4, Capulet tells Paris that because of Tybalt's death, he has not yet talked to Juliet about marriage.

Write about it

Romeo: from misery to joy (in pairs)

Romeo leaves, expressing his deep desire to be with Juliet tonight ('a joy past joy'). But his mood has been very different for most of the scene. He feels full of anguish and despair until he finally sees hope in Friar Lawrence's plan. Some people think his emotions are too extreme and that he thinks only of himself, not Juliet.

- Look back through Scene 3 and identify where you think Romeo's feelings are genuine and where they are 'over the top'. On page 108 you created a 'mood graph' for Juliet. Now do the same for Romeo. Fill it out as you track his emotional state in this scene. Afterwards, put your Juliet and Romeo graphs together and compare how the two young lovers respond to the challenges they face.

1 Focus on Paris (in pairs)

In Baz Luhrmann's movie of the play, Paris was an ordinary, likeable character who appeared in a spacesuit at Capulet's party in Act 1 Scene 5.

- Talk together about your own views of Paris. How old do you think he is? How does he look? How different might he be from Romeo?
- Consider how you think he might behave in Scene 4. In your Director's Journal, write some notes of advice to an actor playing Paris, including how he should move and what tone of voice he should use.

Themes

Fathers and daughters

Capulet is certain that Juliet will obey him ('I think she will be ruled / In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not'). Shakespeare often wrote about fathers who expected to dominate their daughters' lives – an attitude that would have been supported by an Elizabethan audience, which saw male power (particularly in the home) as very important.

- Do you think Shakespeare favours the father's point of view or the daughter's? Write down your thoughts, giving examples to support your opinion. Look out in later scenes for how Juliet openly challenges her father – and how Capulet reacts.

here stands all your state
here is your future

Sojourn stay, wait
signify let you know about
hap happening

brief quickly

fall'n out worked out
move persuade

woo court a woman properly

mewed ... heaviness caged up
in her sorrow (falcons were kept
caged in mews)

desperate tender bold offer

ROMEO AND JULIET ACT 3 SCENE 4

FRIAR LAWRENCE Go hence, good night, and here stands all your state:

Either be gone before the Watch be set,
Or by the break of day disguised from hence.

Sojourn in Mantua; I'll find out your man,

And he shall signify from time to time

Every good hap to you that chances here.

Give me thy hand, 'tis late. Farewell, good night.

ROMEO But that a joy past joy calls out on me,

It were a grief, so brief to part with thee:

Farewell.

170

175

Exeunt

Act 3 Scene 4

Capulet's mansion

Enter old CAPULET, his WIFE, and PARIS.

CAPULET Things have fall'n out, sir, so unluckily
That we have had no time to move our daughter.
Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,
And so did I. Well, we were born to die.

'Tis very late, she'll not come down tonight.

I promise you, but for your company,

I would have been abed an hour ago.

PARIS These times of woe afford no times to woo.

Madam, good night, commend me to your daughter.

LADY CAPULET I will, and know her mind early tomorrow;

Tonight she's mewed up to her heaviness.

[*Paris offers to go in, and Capulet calls him again.*]

CAPULET Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender

Of my child's love: I think she will be ruled

In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not.

5

10

Capulet instructs his wife to tell Juliet that she is to be married to Paris. He decides the wedding will be in three days' time with only a few invited guests.

Write about it

Husband and wife

Every production of the play must address the question of how Juliet's parents feel about each other. Do they love each other? Did they love each other when they married? What does Lady Capulet think of her husband in this scene?

a Write Lady Capulet's private thoughts, considering the following attitudes:

- she finds him tiresome and boring
- she is afraid of him
- she still loves him.

Remember that she appears to mock her husband's manhood in Act 1 Scene 1 (line 67) by suggesting that he needs a crutch rather than a sword. Also, some productions suggest that her extreme grief at Tybalt's death implies she was having an affair with the younger man.

b As a complementary piece, you might try to write as if you are Capulet. What does he really think of his wife?

1 Time begins to run faster (in pairs)

- a** Read Scene 4 aloud, emphasising all the words relating to time. How many can you find (there are well over thirty of them)? Notice how these words add to the impression of fast-moving events.
- b** Read Capulet's lines 19–35 in a variety of different ways: frenzied, hasty, ponderous, agitated. Afterwards, talk together about which of these is the most effective in giving the audience a sense of the gathering momentum of events.

2 Dramatic irony (in pairs)

The scene is full of **dramatic irony** – when the audience knows something that at least one of the characters on stage does not know, and when what is said contrasts with what happens elsewhere in the play. Even as Capulet plans Juliet's marriage, she is eagerly awaiting her husband Romeo in her bedroom.

- Identify and write down four or five examples of dramatic irony in this scene. Then suggest what it is that makes each example ironic (see also pp. 128, 132 and 150).

ere before

my son Capulet already sees Paris as his son-in-law

keep no great ado it will be a simple affair

so late so recently

held him carelessly had little regard for him

revel much celebrate wildly

against for

Afore me indeed

by and by soon

ROMEO AND JULIET ACT 3 SCENE 4

Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed,
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love,
And bid her – mark you me? – on Wednesday next –
But soft, what day is this?

15

PARIS Monday, my lord.

CAPULET Monday, ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon,
A'Thursday let it be – a'Thursday, tell her,
She shall be married to this noble earl.

20

Will you be ready? do you like this haste?
Well, keep no great ado – a friend or two,
For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,
It may be thought we held him carelessly,
Being our kinsman, if we revel much:

25

Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,
And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

PARIS My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

CAPULET Well, get you gone, a'Thursday be it then. –

30

Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed,
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day.
Farewell, my lord. Light to my chamber, ho!

Afore me, it is so very late that we

May call it early by and by. Good night.

35

Exeunt

After their wedding night together, Juliet tries to persuade Romeo that it is not yet dawn, not yet time for him to leave her. At first he says he must go, but then resolves to stay and face capture and death.

Stagecraft

Physical or not? (in small groups)

Most modern productions use the opportunity provided by this scene to suggest the physical passion and desire that exists between the two young lovers, often through imaginative use of costume, lighting or staging. For example, many have a bed on stage (whereas earlier productions did not).

- Read quickly up to line 59. Do you think the language is meant to highlight the physical intimacy between the young lovers, or is their exchange presented as more lyrical and poetic?

▼ How would you stage this dialogue in order to enhance the mood you think is appropriate? Would you include a bed? Why, or why not?



1 How should the lines be spoken? (in pairs)

Take parts and try different ways of speaking lines 1–25 (for example, Juliet as loving, impatient, bossy or sleepy; Romeo as loving, afraid or secretly wanting to leave). Can you agree on how you think the lines should be delivered? In particular, how should lines 11 and 12 be spoken? Pick one or two favourite lines. Talk with your partner about why you enjoy them.

Act 3 Scene 5

Juliet's bedroom

Enter ROMEO and JULIET aloft at the window.

JULIET Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day:
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale. 5

ROMEO It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. 10

JULIET I must be gone and live, or stay and die.
Yond light is not daylight, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhaled
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua. 15

ROMEO Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.
Let me be tane, let me be put to death,
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow; 20

Nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads.
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
How is't, my soul? Let's talk, it is not day. 25

fearful frightened

envious malicious

severing parting

night's candles stars

jocund cheerful

some meteor ... exhaled

meteors were thought to be caused by the sun drawing up vapours from Earth and igniting them

tane captured (taken)

so ... so as long as you want it to happen

reflex of Cynthia's brow

reflection of the edge of the moon (Cynthia is the moon goddess)

vaulty heaven sky

care desire

Juliet accepts that it is morning and time to part. The Nurse warns the lovers that Lady Capulet is coming.
As Romeo leaves, Juliet's words are filled with foreboding.

1 'Some say the lark and loathed toad changed eyes'

There was an old belief that skylarks and toads had exchanged eyes. This explained why toads' eyes were thought more beautiful than larks' eyes. Juliet wishes they had exchanged voices too, because the harsh voice of the toad is more suitable to the lovers' sad parting.

- If you were making a movie of the play and wanted to 'dub in' (add) a sad or ominous sound as background here, what sound would it be? Share your suggestion with the class.

Stagecraft

'He goeth down'

As you continue reading you'll see that Juliet also 'goeth down' (stage direction, line 67).

- Work out how you would stage the scene to make these 'goeth down' movements by Romeo and Juliet as convincing as possible. Sketch a design for your stage set.

2 Visions of doom (in fours)

The final words that the lovers ever speak together are filled with fear about what lies ahead for them (lines 54–9). Both Juliet and Romeo imagine scenes involving their own deaths.

- Act out these six lines, two of you as Romeo, two as Juliet. One pair delivers the lines, the others present the vision of death that each of the characters 'sees'. Show your versions to the class. As you read to the end of the play, you will see how these dark forebodings unfold.

Write about it

Last time together

Lines 1–59 are the last time Romeo and Juliet will see each other alive.

- Write out how you would stage this episode to bring out its poignancy and dramatic impact. Concentrate in particular on how you would manage the growing pressure that builds around the lovers' final parting.

sharps shrill notes

division music (see how Juliet puns on 'divideth' in the next line; notice too how Romeo puns on 'light' and 'dark' in line 36)

affray frighten (from each other's arms)

hunt's-up hunters' morning song

much in years much older

omit miss

discourses conversations

ill-divining anticipating evil

so low down below (Juliet is looking down on him from above)

Dry sorrow Elizabethans thought that each sigh cost a drop of blood

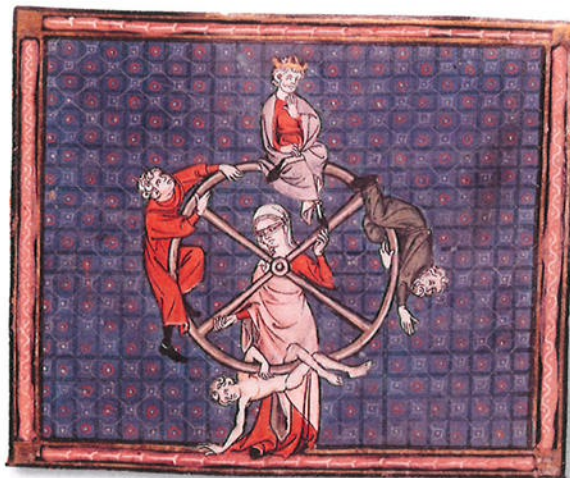
JULIET	It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away! It is the lark that sings so out of tune, Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps. Some say the lark makes sweet division: This doth not so, for she divideth us. Some say the lark and loathed toad changed eyes; O now I would they had changed voices too, Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray, Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day. O now be gone, more light and light it grows. More light and light, more dark and dark our woes!	30
ROMEO		35
	<i>Enter NURSE [hastily].</i>	
NURSE	Madam!	
JULIET	Nurse?	
NURSE	Your lady mother is coming to your chamber. The day is broke, be wary, look about.	40
JULIET	Then, window, let day in, and let life out.	
ROMEO	Farewell, farewell! one kiss, and I'll descend. <i>[He goeth down.]</i>	
JULIET	Art thou gone so, love, lord, ay husband, friend? I must hear from thee every day in the hour, For in a minute there are many days. O, by this count I shall be much in years Ere I again behold my Romeo!	45
ROMEO	<i>[From below]</i> Farewell! I will omit no opportunity That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.	50
JULIET	O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?	
ROMEO	I doubt it not, and all these woes shall serve For sweet discourses in our times to come.	
JULIET	O God, I have an ill-divining soul! Methinks I see thee now, thou art so low, As one dead in the bottom of a tomb. Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale. And trust me, love, in my eye so do you: Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu!	55
ROMEO		<i>Exit</i>

Lady Capulet mistakes Juliet's tears for Romeo as grief for Tybalt's death. Juliet's replies strengthen her mother's mistaken belief, and she threatens vengeance, promising to have Romeo poisoned in Mantua.

1 Fortune

Juliet turns fortune into a person in lines 60–4 (see pp. 214–15 for more on personification).

- Imagine you are designing a production of the play. The director tells you that he wants an image or a statue of Fortune to be on stage throughout the play. Make drawings of your suggestions for that statue. Talk with others about whether you think the director's request for such an ever-present image is a good idea.



◀ In medieval imagery, Fortune was depicted with a wheel, spinning it randomly.

2 Double meanings (in fours)

Lady Capulet thinks that Juliet is agreeing with her. But Juliet's replies to her mother are filled with double meaning, and she responds ambiguously each time. This is another example of dramatic irony (see p. 122), because the audience, like Juliet, knows what Lady Capulet does not. The activity below will help you emphasise this.

- a** One person reads Lady Capulet and one reads Juliet (lines 68–102); the other two are Juliet's alter ego. In their own words, they comment as many times as possible on what Juliet is really thinking as she speaks. Juliet reads slowly, a line or two at a time. For example:

Juliet: Madam, I am not well.

Alter ego: Because I've just parted from my husband and my heart is full of sorrow.

Juliet: Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

Alter ego: But let me weep for Romeo, who I love.

- b** Try the exercise several times, changing roles. Discuss what these double meanings tell you about Juliet's character; and how they add dramatic impact.

fickle changeable, faithless

unaccustomed cause
unexpected event

procures brings

And if even if
have done stop crying

asunder apart

venge avenge

runagate runaway

unaccustomed dram
unexpected dose of poison

JULIET O Fortune, Fortune, all men call thee fickle;
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him
That is renowned for faith? Be fickle, Fortune:
For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long,
But send him back.

Enter Mother [LADY CAPULET below].

LADY CAPULET Ho, daughter, are you up?

JULIET Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.

Is she not down so late, or up so early?

What unaccustomed cause procures her hither?

[She goeth down from the window and enters below.]

LADY CAPULET Why how now, Juliet?

JULIET Madam, I am not well.

LADY CAPULET Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?

What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?

And if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live;

Therefore have done. Some grief shows much of love,

But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

JULIET Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

LADY CAPULET So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend

Which you weep for.

JULIET Feeling so the loss,

I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

LADY CAPULET Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death

As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.

JULIET What villain, madam?

LADY CAPULET That same villain Romeo.

JULIET *[Aside]* Villain and he be many miles asunder. –

God pardon him, I do with all my heart:

And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

LADY CAPULET That is because the traitor murderer lives.

JULIET Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands.

Would none but I might venge my cousin's death!

LADY CAPULET We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not:

Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,

Where that same banished runagate doth live,

Shall give him such an unaccustomed dram

That he shall soon keep Tybalt company;

And then I hope thou wilt be satisfied.

Juliet continues to mislead her mother. Lady Capulet tells her she must marry Paris on Thursday. Juliet, appalled, refuses to do so. Capulet comes in and mistakes Juliet's tears for sorrow for Tybalt.

Themes

Fathers and daughters (in small groups)

What does this arranged marriage suggest to you about male–female relationships in Verona?

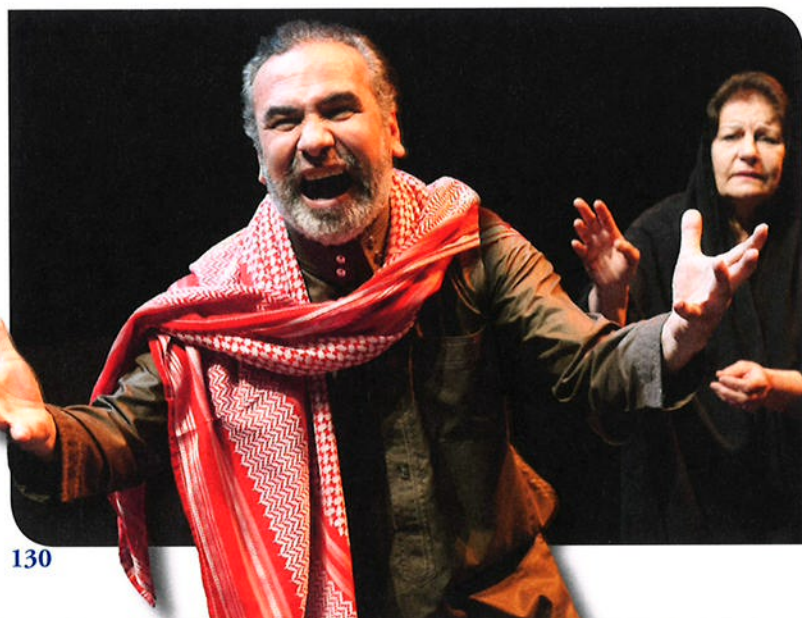
- If you are female, what would you do if you were suddenly told that your father had arranged a marriage for you to a man you barely know? If you are male, do you think fathers should decide whom their daughters should marry? Record your answers to share with the class.

Stagecraft

Capulet: from comforting to furious father

As you read what Capulet says in this scene, you will find that the tone and style of his language change. He begins (lines 126–38) by offering comfort and support to Juliet. Then, as he learns of Juliet's refusal to marry Paris, his language changes and in lines 141–5, he speaks of her in the third person ('she', 'her'). This signals that he is distancing himself from his daughter and in his speeches that follow he explodes in fury, heaping all his rage on Juliet. In one production, Capulet hurled a glass of wine in his daughter's face; in others he is seen to slap Juliet.

- Can either of these interpretations be justified? What staging ideas do you have for showing Capulet's gathering rage? Try some out!



vexed troubled

temper mix (but Juliet also means weaken the poison to give Romeo peaceful sleep)

abhors hates

wreak avenge or bestow

beseech may I ask

heaviness sadness

Ere before

It rains downright Juliet is in floods of tears

conduit water-pipe or fountain

- JULIET Indeed I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo, till I behold him – dead –
Is my poor heart, so for a kinsman vexed. 95
Madam, if you could find out but a man
To bear a poison, I would temper it,
That Romeo should upon receipt thereof
Soon sleep in quiet. O how my heart abhors
To hear him named and cannot come to him, 100
To wreak the love I bore my cousin
Upon his body that hath slaughtered him!
- LADY CAPULET Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.*
But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.
- JULIET And joy comes well in such a needy time. 105
What are they, beseech your ladyship?
- LADY CAPULET Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child,
One who, to put thee from thy heaviness,
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy,
That thou expects not, nor I looked not for. 110
- JULIET Madam, in happy time, what day is that?
- LADY CAPULET Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn,
The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,
The County Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride. 115
- JULIET Now by Saint Peter's Church and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride.
I wonder at this haste, that I must wed
Ere he that should be husband comes to woo.
I pray you tell my lord and father, madam, 120
I will not marry yet, and when I do, I swear
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris. These are news indeed!
- LADY CAPULET Here comes your father, tell him so yourself;
And see how he will take it at your hands. 125

Enter CAPULET and Nurse.

- CAPULET When the sun sets, the earth doth drizzle dew,
But for the sunset of my brother's son
It rains downright.
How now, a conduit, girl? What, still in tears?

Capulet elaborately compares Juliet's tears to a shipwrecking storm. But he then flies into a towering rage on hearing of Juliet's refusal to marry Paris. He threatens and insults her.

Themes

Fathers and daughters: Capulet's rage (in large groups)

This is an activity for the hall or drama studio, but it can also be adapted for the classroom.

- One person is Juliet; all the others are Lord Capulet. Juliet sits still in the middle of a circle, with the others all round her. Those reading Capulet will speak everything in lines 149–57, 160–8 and 176–95. They walk around Juliet and hurl their language at her. Each Capulet speaks just a phrase or a line or two before the next Capulet carries on. For example: first Capulet, 'How how, how how, chopt-logic?'; second Capulet, 'What is this?'; third Capulet, 'Proud' and 'I thank you', and 'I thank you not', and so on (it becomes far worse!).
- Juliet replies to every Capulet with her lines 158–9 ('Good father; I beseech you on my knees, / Hear me with patience but to speak a word').
- Work through the activity several times, with a different Juliet each time. Remember that it's a difficult thing for Juliet to endure because she's on the receiving end of a terrifying tongue-lashing by her father. So don't force anyone into playing Juliet; only use volunteers!
- When you've tried this activity a number of times, talk together about the language. What is it like to undergo this verbal abuse? How does it feel to be delivering it? What does it tell you about Capulet's character? And what does it add to your understanding of the play's exploration of the theme of relationships between parents and their children?

1 Does Lady Capulet mean it? (in pairs)

'I would the fool were married to her grave', says Lady Capulet (line 140). Do you think she really means it?

- Take turns to speak her nine words aloud in a variety of ways until you have what you think is the most convincing version. Then talk together about the impact these words might have on Juliet. Look out for how this becomes another example of dramatic irony as the play unfolds and the audience sees what finally happens to Juliet.

counterfeits make an image of
bark ship

overset turn upside down

decree command

take me with you explain to me

proud grateful
wrought persuaded
bride bridegroom

chopt-logic riddles

minion spoilt brat

fettle your fine joints get ready
(the expression comes from
grooming a horse)

hurdle frame on which prisoners
were dragged to execution

green-sickness carrion
pale-faced rotting meat

tallow pale, waxy

My fingers itch I want to hit her

hilding useless person

Evermore show'ring? In one little body
Thou counterfeits a bark, a sea, a wind: 130

For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,
Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs,
Who, raging with thy tears and they with them,
Without a sudden calm, will overset 135

Thy tempest-tossed body. How now, wife,
Have you delivered to her our decree?

LADY CAPULET Ay, sir, but she will none, she gives you thanks.

I would the fool were married to her grave.

CAPULET Soft, take me with you, take me with you, wife. 140

How, will she none? doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? doth she not count her blest,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bride?

JULIET Not proud you have, but thankful that you have: 145

Proud can I never be of what I hate,
But thankful even for hate that is meant love.

CAPULET How how, how how, chopt-logic? What is this?
'Proud', and 'I thank you', and 'I thank you not',
And yet 'not proud', mistress minion you? 150

Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no pouds,
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.

Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage!
You tallow-face! 155

LADY CAPULET Fie, fie, what, are you mad?

JULIET Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

[She kneels down.]

CAPULET Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!
I tell thee what: get thee to church a' Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face. 160

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me!
My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest
That God had lent us but this only child,
But now I see this one is one too much,
And that we have a curse in having her.
Out on her, hilding!

165

Capulet, further enraged by the Nurse's defence of Juliet, continues to storm at Juliet, threatening to disown her if she will not obey him and marry Paris. Lady Capulet refuses to help her daughter.

Write about it

The power of fathers

But and you will not wed, I'll pardon you (line 187)

And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend (line 191)

'If you don't wed Paris, get out!' is what Capulet says, using 'pardon' (forgive) ironically. He then stresses his absolute possession of Juliet: she is like an object he can give away to anyone he pleases.

- Carry out some research into what power fathers had over their daughters in Shakespeare's time. Write up your findings. How closely do Capulet's attitudes match what you have discovered?
- Write a paragraph in which you explore how you think a modern audience would respond to Capulet's (and his wife's) treatment of Juliet in this scene.

1 The Capulets' conversation (in pairs)

- In line 198, Juliet pleads: 'O sweet my mother, cast me not away!' Why do you think Lady Capulet replies as she does in lines 202–3?
- Imagine that Lady Capulet catches up with her husband shortly after leaving Juliet. Have her explain to him exactly what she feels about Juliet's behaviour. How will he reply and what else do they say to each other? Improvise their conversation.

Language in the play

Imagery: Juliet's ominous prediction

Again Juliet uses an image that links marriage and death, when she says: 'make the bridal bed / In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.'

- Produce a drawing to illustrate Juliet's dark and troubling prophecy in lines 200–1.

rate tell her off

smatter chat

God-i-goden! clear off!
(mockingly: 'good evening')

gravity important advice
(Capulet is being sarcastic)

gossip's bowl drinks at a
hen party

God's bread the sacred bread
served at Mass (an oath)

still always

demesnes lands

ligned descended

puling crying

mammet puppet

in her fortune's tender
at the moment when fortune
is kind to her

Graze feed (like an animal)

advise think carefully

be forsworn be denied,
break my oath

NURSE	God in heaven bless her!	
	You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.	
CAPULET	And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,	170
	Good Prudence, smatter with your gossips, go.	
NURSE	I speak no treason.	
CAPULET	O God-i-goden!	
NURSE	May not one speak?	
CAPULET	Peace, you mumbling fool!	
	Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl,	
	For here we need it not.	
LADY CAPULET	You are too hot.	175
CAPULET	God's bread, it makes me mad! Day, night, work, play,	
	Alone, in company, still my care hath been	
	To have her matched; and having now provided	
	A gentleman of noble parentage,	
	Of fair demesnes, youthful and nobly ligned,	180
	Stuffed, as they say, with honourable parts,	
	Proportioned as one's thought would wish a man,	
	And then to have a wretched puling fool,	
	A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,	
	To answer 'I'll not wed, I cannot love;	185
	I am too young, I pray you pardon me.'	
	But and you will not wed, I'll pardon you:	
	Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.	
	Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.	
	Thursday is near, lay hand on heart, advise:	190
	And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;	
	And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,	
	For by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,	
	Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.	
	Trust to't, bethink you, I'll not be forsworn.	Exit 195
JULIET	Is there no pity sitting in the clouds	
	That sees into the bottom of my grief?	
	O sweet my mother, cast me not away!	
	Delay this marriage for a month, a week,	
	Or if you do not, make the bridal bed	200
	In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.	
LADY CAPULET	Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.	
	Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.	Exit

Juliet seeks comfort from the Nurse, who urges her to marry Paris. Feeling betrayed, Juliet sends the Nurse away, vowing never to trust her again. Juliet resolves to seek Friar Lawrence's aid.

Write about it

The Nurse confesses

Towards the end of this scene, Juliet says that she is going to see Friar Lawrence to 'make confession' (if Juliet frankly confesses her sins to the Friar in private then he will be able to pardon her for the things she has done wrong).

- Imagine that the Nurse also goes to a religious man to make her own confession. What would she say? What has she done so far that might weigh heavily on her mind and might bother her so much that she needs to talk about it? Script her confessional speech.

1 The Nurse's betrayal (whole class)

Some critics see the Nurse's suggestion that Juliet should marry Paris as the ultimate betrayal of their relationship – a complete rejection of the loyalty and trust between them.

- Put the Nurse on trial. Question her about her motives and work out whether she really has Juliet's best interests at heart. Afterwards, give your verdict on whether the Nurse is guilty of betrayal or not.

Characters

Juliet: dealing with disasters

Juliet feels trapped. Her father has threatened her; her mother has abandoned her and she feels the Nurse has proved a false friend. She also feels that her religion adds to her desolation. In lines 205–8, she recognises that only by Romeo's death can she sincerely take a faithful (religious) vow to marry Paris. Her final line as she leaves to visit the Friar (line 242) is full of foreboding.

- Review Juliet's experiences in this scene and consider carefully how she deals with the wide range of tests and challenges thrown at her. What aspects of her character do you think emerge most strongly? Create a 'word wall' of adjectives that describe her. Then link them to evidence and quotations from the scene.

stratagems tricks

all the world to nothing
it's a safe bet

challenge claim

dishclout dishcloth, rag

green green eyes were thought
to be especially admirable

Beshrew curse

absolved forgiven

wish me thus forsworn
make me a promise-breaker

bosom secret thoughts

twain two (separated)

- JULIET O God! – O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?
My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven; 205
How shall that faith return again to earth,
Unless that husband send it me from heaven
By leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me.
Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems
Upon so soft a subject as myself! 210
What say'st thou? hast thou not a word of joy?
Some comfort, Nurse.
- NURSE Faith, here it is:
Romeo is banished, and all the world to nothing
That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;
Or if he do, it needs must be by stealth. 215
Then since the case so stands as now it doth,
I think it best you married with the County.
O, he's a lovely gentleman!
Romeo's a dishclout to him. An eagle, madam,
Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye 220
As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,
I think you are happy in this second match,
For it excels your first, or if it did not,
Your first is dead, or 'twere as good he were
As living here and you no use of him. 225
- JULIET Speak'st thou from thy heart?
NURSE And from my soul too, else beshrew them both.
JULIET Amen.
NURSE What?
JULIET Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much. 230
Go in, and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeased my father, to Lawrence' cell,
To make confession and to be absolved.
- NURSE Marry, I will, and this is wisely done. [Exit]
JULIET [She looks after Nurse.] Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend! 235
Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,
Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue
Which she hath praised him with above compare
So many thousand times? Go, counsellor,
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain. 240
I'll to the Friar to know his remedy;
If all else fail, myself have power to die. Exit

Looking back at Act 3

Activities for groups or individuals

1 Shakespeare's stagecraft: contrasts

One reason why Shakespeare's plays work so well on stage is because he ensured that every scene contrasts in some way with the scene that precedes or follows it. These **juxtapositions** (contrasts) are often ironic. For example, Act 3 Scene 1 ends with Mercutio and Tybalt killed and Romeo banished on pain of death. But Scene 2 opens with Juliet in an ecstatic mood, longing for Romeo to come to her. The audience knows – but she is unaware of – the disasters that have occurred. This dramatic irony adds to the emotional impact of the play on the audience as they watch a joyful Juliet, knowing her happiness will shortly be shattered.

- Work through Act 3 and write a paragraph (like the explanation given above) of how each scene contrasts with the one that precedes it. You could focus your enquiries on aspects such as setting, exploration of theme/character, mood and the unfolding story.

2 Characters' motives

List each character that appears in this act. Write a single sentence for each that begins 'What I want most is ...'. How much agreement is there in the class on each character's major motive?

3 Discussing banishment

- Is there a modern equivalent of the punishment of banishment?
- Is banishment really worse than death, as Romeo imagines?
- Why doesn't Juliet simply decide to join Romeo in Mantua?

4 Soundbites

Soundbites are very short clips of what someone has said, broadcast on television or radio.

- Make up soundbites for each scene. They should be pithy and attention-grabbing, like headlines.

5 Why did Mercutio have to die?

Mercutio dies before the play even reaches its halfway point. Many reasons have been suggested for why Shakespeare kills him off so early in the play, including the idea that he was developing into such an attractive character that his continuing presence would adversely affect the presentation of the main protagonist Romeo, with whom Shakespeare frequently compares and contrasts him.

- Use this suggestion as a starting point for investigating the possible reasons behind the decision to have Mercutio die. Consider Mercutio's character, his role in the play, how he reflects its key themes and his part in the developing tragedy. Supplement your enquiries by looking at the information in the 'Characters' section on page 208 and by referring back to your Character file on Mercutio.
- Write an essay on Mercutio's character and his 'early' death. You could answer the question 'Why did Mercutio have to die?'

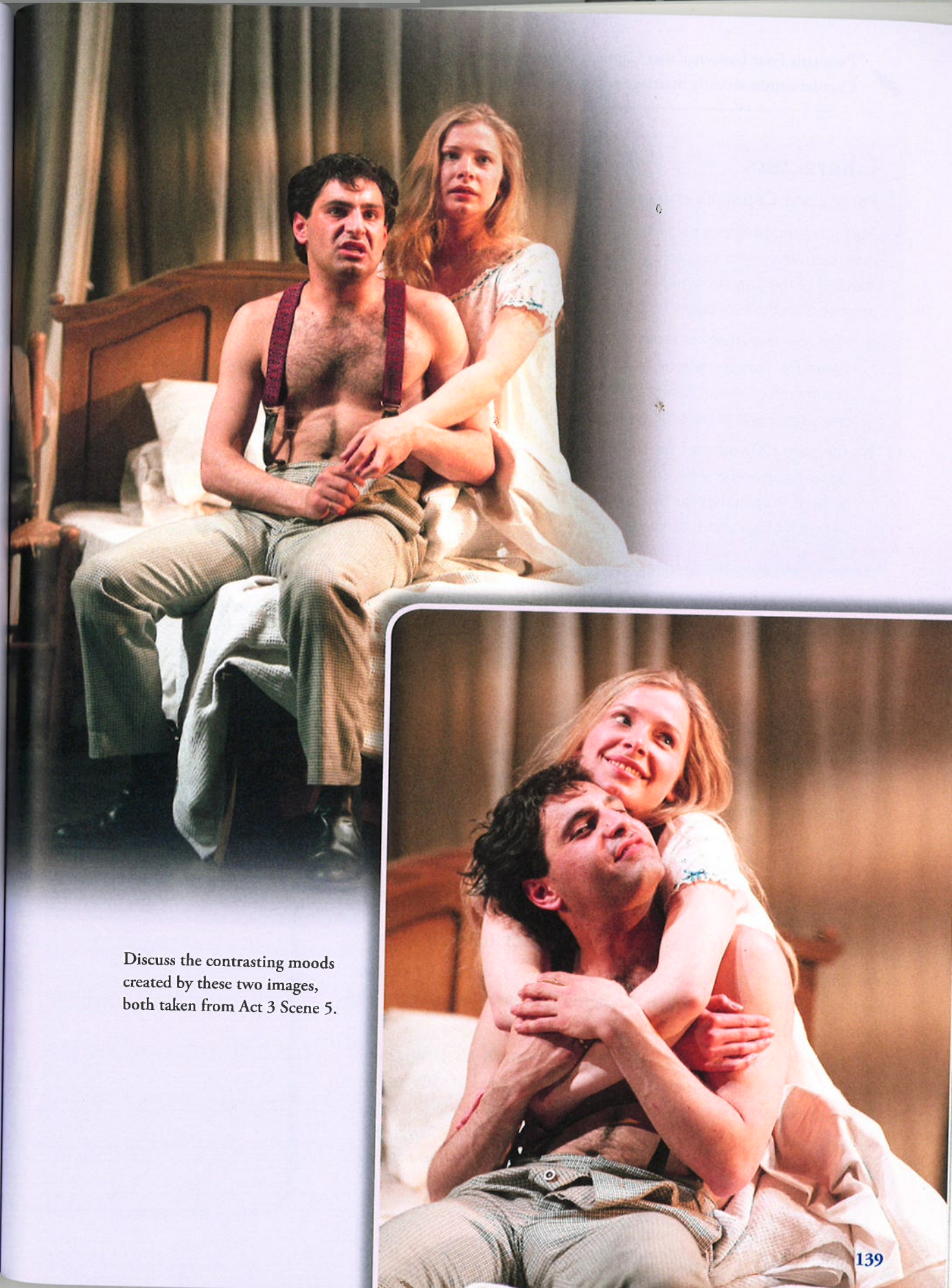
6 Guess the incident ... or the line

Select an incident or line from Act 3 and prepare a short mime or a tableau. Tell the class which scene your incident or line comes from, then show your mime or tableau. If other people can guess the incident or line correctly, that's a compliment to their perception – and to your ability in performance!

7 Young or grown up?

In Act 3, the relationship between Romeo and Juliet quickly develops: they move from young lovers to husband and wife. Besides that, they each have a host of problems heaped on them from outside their relationship.

- Trace the lovers' journey through Act 3, then prepare an oral presentation comparing how Romeo and Juliet each deal with what is thrown at them. Which of them copes better with the tests and challenges?



Discuss the contrasting moods created by these two images, both taken from Act 3 Scene 5.