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ACT 3, SCENE 5

Juliet's defiance

Plot

After what seems to be a brief wedding night, Romeo and Juliet bid each other farewell. Lady Capulet informs Juliet of her imminent marriage to Paris. Juliet is naturally disturbed by this news - she is already married! Both parents grow increasingly angry with her and storm off. The Nurse offers no comfort either.

Character

The relationship between Romeo and Juliet (lines 1-64)

1. Find quotes from Romeo and Juliet's dialogue to show how deeply they care for each other.
2. How can we tell that Romeo is spellbound by Juliet?
3. Describe the tone of voice used by each character as they speak their lines.

The relationship between Lady Capulet and Juliet (lines 65-204)

4. Quote the line that shows Juliet is not accustomed to her mother visiting her in her bedroom to chat to her.
5. Why does Juliet tell her mother she is not well? What does this tell us about their relationship?
6. How does Lady Capulet misinterpret Juliet's emotions?
7. Is Lady Capulet sensitive to Juliet's feelings of loss?
8. How does Juliet deliberately deceive her mother in her replies?
9. Does Lady Capulet feel that Paris is a good match for Juliet? Quote from the text to support your answer.
10. Describe Juliet's opinion of her proposed marriage.
11. Why does Lady Capulet turn on her daughter so viciously?

The relationship between Capulet and Juliet (lines 126-196)

12. What does *decree* (line 138) suggest to us about Capulet's wishes?
13. Capulet reacts strongly against Juliet. What are his reasons (lines 142-145)?
14. Quote a line that suggests Capulet will not be disobeyed.
15. Is Capulet prepared to allow Juliet to voice her opinion?
16. Capulet insults Juliet by calling her names. Say why he does this (lines 164-167 and 178-199).
17. What is Capulet prepared to do if Juliet refuses to marry Paris?

The relationship between the Nurse and Juliet (lines 205-243)

18. To whom does Juliet appeal for advice? Why does she appeal to this person?
19. Does the Nurse manage to comfort Juliet? Why/why not?
20. The relations change between Juliet and her Nurse. Quote the line that indicates Juliet's frustration with the old woman.

Imagery

Light and dark

The scene opens with many references to and contrasts between the light (daybreak, when Romeo must leave Juliet) and the dark (night time, when Romeo is still able to be with Juliet). The central image is of the sun, but Romeo and Juliet have also consistently seen each other, throughout the play, as the source of light in a dark and forbidding world (for example, Romeo's *What light through yonder window breaks?*).

Theme

Fate and destiny

Juliet has a strange premonition. These lines are deeply ironic: *Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low, / As one dead in the bottom of a tomb*. She also says that fortune is fickle (lines 60–64). Later in the scene, when she hears of her planned marriage to Paris, she cannot believe that fate has dealt her such a wicked hand – *Alack, alack, that heaven should practise such stratagems / Upon so soft a subject as myself!* (lines 210–211).

Like many of Shakespeare's plays, *Romeo and Juliet* has a subplot. This is a 'story' that runs alongside the main story, but is of lesser importance. The subplot is nevertheless important because it has influence and relevance. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the subplot is Paris's suit and Juliet's impending marriage to him. The subplot creates more tension. It forces Juliet into making some hasty decisions. She is not usually an impulsive character, but because a deadline is forced upon her she must act swiftly. Her actions prove disastrous.



Friar Lawrence advises and influences Romeo (Leonard Whiting) and Juliet (Olivia Hussey) throughout the play. A scene from Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 film.