

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ***Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare**

### **Act 4 Comprehension Questions**

#### **HOW TO QUOTE SHAKESPEARE**

Plays are broken down into acts, scenes, and lines. When citing Shakespeare, you're telling the person reading your paper exactly where to find the quote in the text.

In your parenthetical citation, separate the act, scene, and lines with **periods**.

\*Remember – line numbering starts at 1 in every **scene**.

Example question: What does Sampson call the Montagues in the beginning of the play *Romeo and Juliet*?

Answer in My Own Words: Sampson calls the Montagues dogs.

Answer in Quote: "If I meet any of those Montague does today, I'm ready to attack them" (*Rom. 1. 1. 1-2*).

*Rom.* is the abbreviation for *Romeo and Juliet*    Act 1, scene 1, lines 1-2



#### **Act 4, scene 1**

1. What is the setting of this scene? *Friar Lawrence's cell*
2. According to Paris, why has Lord Capulet decided to move up the wedding? *According to Paris, Lord Capulet has moved up the wedding "to stop the inundation of her tears" (4.1.11-12), or, in other words, to stop Juliet from crying.*
3. How does Juliet show great self-control in this scene? *Juliet shows self-control by not revealing her true emotions about Paris. She is angry and upset to be forced into marriage with him, but she uses sarcasm to control the conversation.*
4. Summarize Friar Lawrence's plan. *Friar Lawrence's plan is that Juliet agrees to the marriage with Paris on Thursday. On Wednesday, Juliet will drink from a vial that will stop her pulse and make her appear dead, but she will really wake in 48 hours. Once they move Juliet to the Capulet tomb, Romeo will meet her there, and they will be together.*

#### **Act 4, scene 2**

5. What is the setting of this scene? *the Capulet's home*
6. What decision does Lord Capulet make in this scene that has tragic consequences? Why does he make it? *The decision to send Juliet to see Friar Lawrence was a tragic one for Lord Capulet's cause. He wants her to go to understand her sin in disobeying him. When Juliet returns, she says that Friar Lawrence "has learned me to repent the sin of disobedient opposition" (4.2.14-15); she has learned her lesson*

## Act 4, scene 3

7. What is the setting of this scene? *Juliet's bedroom*
8. What does Juliet tell her mother?
- My Own Words: *that she needs no help and wants to be left alone*
  - Quote: *"Ay, those attires are best; but, gentle nurse, I pray thee leave me to myself tonight; for I have need to many orisons to move the heavens to smile upon my state, which, well thou knowest, is cross and full of sin" (4.3.1-5).*
    - Notes:
      - orisons = prayers
      - state = condition
      - cross = selfish; disobedient
9. What is Juliet's first concern about drinking the potion?
- My Own Words: *that it won't work and she will have to marry Paris*
  - Quote: *"What if this mixture do not work at all? Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?" (4.3.21-22).*
10. What is Juliet's second worry about the potion?
- My Own Words: *that perhaps Friar Lawrence is really trying to kill her*
  - Quote: *"What if it be a poison which the friar subtly hath minist' red to have me dead, lest in this marriage he should be dishonored because he married me before to Romeo?" (4.3.24-27).*
    - Notes: minist' red = given me
11. What is Juliet's "back up" plan?
- My Own Words: *a dagger*
12. What finally makes Juliet drink the potion?
- My Own Words: *she thinks she sees Tybalt's ghost coming for Romeo*
  - Quote: *"O, look! Methinks I see my cousin's ghost seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body upon a rapier's point" (4.3.55-57).*
13. Paraphrase Juliet's soliloquy (speech). (What emotions is she experiencing? Why?)
- *She is concerned that the mixture won't work; she will kill herself with a dagger if it does not.*
  - *She is concern that Friar Lawrence has actually given her a poison.*
  - *She is concerned about waking up in the tomb alone without Romeo; she is afraid there will not be enough air and will suffocate.*
  - *She is concerned about the other people in the tomb; she does not want their spirits to haunt her.*
  - *She is concerned about the smell of the corpses.*

14. Suggest the purpose of the soliloquy. (What does it contribute to the play?) *This soliloquy reveals the depth of love that Juliet feels for Romeo. Even after all of the terrifying concerns she expresses, she still drinks the vial with the small hope that she will be with her love. Drinking the potion constitutes an action in which Juliet takes her life into her own hands, and determines its worth to her.*

#### **Act 4, scene 4**

15. What is the setting of this scene? *3 a.m. at the Capulet's house*

16. What is the purpose of this scene? *This scene can be regarded as comic relief. Some believe this scene acts as a moment for the audience to recuperate from the tragedies in Act 4, in preparation for the even greater tragedy of Act 5. The scene also gives the reader a profoundly different view of the reaction of the lower classes to the tragedy of Juliet's death; they are more concerned about being out of a job than about her death.*

#### **Act 4, scene 5**

17. What is the setting of this scene? *Juliet's bedroom*

18. Compare the reactions of Nurse, Lady Capulet, Lord Capulet, and Paris when they discover Juliet's death.

- Nurse: *Nurse immediately goes into hysterical crying and says to Juliet if you do not wake up, "I will die with thee!" (4.5.21). It is clear that Nurse truly loves Juliet and sees her as a daughter.*
- Lady Capulet: *Lady Capulet is also clearly upset as Juliet was her only daughter. She curses the day and says that death has taken something from her.*
- Lord Capulet: *Lord Capulet is also upset, but is concerned that her death has ruined the wedding and that her death was not well timed, which shows his ego.*
- Paris: *Paris' reaction shows that he truly did love Juliet. He says, "love! O life, but love in death" (4.5.59).*

19. Draw conclusions based on your observations listed in question 13.

20. What is Friar Lawrence's part in this scene regarding his and Juliet's plan? *Friar Lawrence's role in the plan is to convince the family to have a funeral immediately so that her soul will be in heaven. After Lawrence's speech, Lord Capulet decides to have the wedding be the funeral.*

# *Romeo and Juliet Act 4 Summaries*

## **Scene 1**

- Paris has stopped by Friar Laurence's church to make plans for his upcoming marriage to Juliet. The Friar is quietly freaking out, since he's not a big fan of enabling bigamy (the act of going through a marriage ceremony while already married to another person).
- Juliet rushes in to see the friar talking with the last person on earth she wants to see: Paris.
- "Happily met, my lady and my wife," Paris says to Juliet as she enters. It's pretty much downhill from there.
- Eventually, Paris takes the hint that Juliet needs to make confession to the Friar, and he leaves—but not before giving Juliet an unwanted and uninspiring kiss.
- Left alone, Juliet whips out a dagger and tells the Friar she will kill herself if he can't think of a way for her to avoid marrying Paris.
- Confronted with his second suicidal teen in under 24 hours, Friar Laurence remains calm. Once again, he has a better plan that doesn't involve suicide.
- He tells Juliet his idea. He knows of a weird potion that will make Juliet appear as if she is dead for "two and forty hours." That's Shakespeare for 42 hours.
- Conveniently, the Capulets don't actually bury their dead in the ground, which otherwise would kind of screw up the plan. Instead, they stick them in a big tomb.
- If everyone thinks Juliet is dead, the Friar explains, she won't have to marry Paris. Then he and Romeo can come to the tomb and wait for her to wake up, and then she and Romeo can go to Mantua together. The Friar promises to send a letter to Romeo so he knows what's going on.
- Juliet thinks this is a great idea, which we can only understand by assuming she's never seen a tragedy in her life. She thanks the Friar and heads home.

## **Scene 2**

- Juliet comes home, all fake-humble and apologetic. She apologizes to Lord Capulet for being a bratty teenager and says she'll marry Paris.
- Lord Capulet is overjoyed and decides the marriage will take place the next day, even if he has to stay up *all* night making preparations.

## **Scene 3**

- Juliet convinces the Nurse and Lady Capulet to leave her alone, then takes out the potion the Friar gave her.
- She worries for a brief moment that it might be real poison, and then freaks herself out by imagining what it'll be like to awake surrounded by a bunch of dead bodies, including the fresh corpse of her cousin Tybalt.
- She drinks the potion, making sure to fall on to the bed instead of dropping awkwardly onto the floor.

#### Scene 4

- Everyone is bustling around cheerfully trying to get things ready for the wedding that morning. No one has realized yet that the bride has a serious case of cold feet.

#### Scene 5

- When the Nurse comes to wake Juliet up in the morning, she discovers the girl dead. *Oh, bummer. Wonder if they'll get the wedding photographer's deposit back?*
- Then the Friar shows up and takes action, telling them to take Juliet to the tomb, stat.