

# Romeo and Juliet – Knowledge Organiser

## Plot summary

**Prologue:** A sonnet, recited by the chorus, outlines the play.

### Act 1

**Act I, Scene 1:** Capulet and Montague servants fight in the streets. Benvolio tries to break them up, but Tybalt arrives and challenges him. The Prince arrives and declares that any further fighting will be punished with death. After this, the Montagues discuss Romeo's melancholy state and Benvolio learns Romeo is in love with Rosaline.

**Act I, Scene 2:** Paris seeks Capulet's permission to marry his daughter Juliet. Capulet says she is too young, but Paris should try to win her affections at his banquet. Capulet's invitation list is intercepted by Benvolio and Romeo, who decide to attend the event.

**Act I, Scene 3:** The Nurse and Lady Capulet tell Juliet about Paris, and she agrees to consider him as a potential suitor.

**Act I, Scene 4:** Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio arrive at the banquet, and Mercutio banters with Romeo.

**Act I, Scene 5:** Romeo and Juliet see each other and fall in love immediately. Tybalt sees Romeo and wants to fight him, but Lord Capulet stops him.

### Act 2

**Act II, Scene 1:** Romeo separates himself from his friends as they leave the party.

**Act II, Scene 2:** Romeo listens to Juliet at her balcony, and they exchange vows to marry. Juliet says she will send a messenger to Romeo the next day to arrange the wedding.

**Act II, Scene 3:** Romeo goes to see Friar Lawrence to ask for his help with marrying Juliet. The Friar agrees, hoping that their alliance will end their families' feuding.

**Act II, Scene 4:** Benvolio and Mercutio discuss Tybalt, who has challenged Romeo to a duel. Romeo arrives and the friends banter about his love. The Nurse appears; Romeo's friends depart. Romeo gives the Nurse a message for Juliet: she is to go to Friar Lawrence that afternoon, and they shall be married. He arranges for the Nurse to receive a rope-ladder for Juliet to lower for him that night.

**Act II, Scene 5:** The Nurse returns to an impatient Juliet. She teases her charge by withholding the message but then tells her the good news.

**Act II, Scene 6:** Juliet comes to Romeo in Friar Lawrence's cell, and they greet each other joyfully. The Friar prepares to marry them.

### Act 3

**Act III, Scene 1:** Benvolio and Mercutio encounter Tybalt, and Mercutio mocks him. Romeo arrives and refuses to accept Tybalt's challenge to a duel (due to his secret marriage to Juliet). Mercutio thinks this is cowardly so fights on his behalf. Romeo tries to intervene and Mercutio is killed under his arm, cursing the families as he dies. Romeo fights and kills Tybalt to get revenge. At Benvolio's urging, Romeo flees. The Prince appears and interrogates Benvolio. Judging Tybalt to be guiltier than Romeo, he spares the latter the death sentence but banishes him from Verona.

**Act III, Scene 2:** Juliet longs for night, when Romeo is to come. The Nurse brings her word of Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment, and volunteers to bring Romeo to the distraught girl.

**Act III, Scene 3:** Romeo is in a state of anger and disbelief, hiding with the Friar. The Nurse arrives with word of Juliet's distress. The Friar chastises Romeo for behaving so foolishly and proposes that, after a night with Juliet, Romeo should flee to Mantua until everything is cleared up. Romeo agrees and leaves.

**Act III, Scene 4:** Capulet decides to marry Juliet to Paris in three days to cheer her up.

**Act III, Scene 5:** Romeo and Juliet awake after spending the night together and Romeo leaves. Lady Capulet arrives and tells Juliet about her impending marriage. Juliet refuses and her parents fly into a rage. The Nurse advises that Juliet ignore her marriage to Romeo, which no one else knows about, and marry Paris.

### Act 4

**Act IV, Scene 1:** Juliet interrupts Paris talking to Friar Lawrence and, when he leaves, threatens to kill herself if the Friar doesn't help her. He agrees to provide her with a potion that will make her seem to be dead, until Romeo collects her from the family crypt.

**Act IV, Scene 2:** Juliet apologizes to her father, promising to obey him and marry Paris. Capulet moves the wedding up a day to the next morning.

**Act IV, Scene 3:** Juliet drinks the potion.

**Act IV, Scene 4:** Capulet sends the Nurse to awaken Juliet on the morning of her wedding day.

**Act IV, Scene 5:** The Nurse finds Juliet dead and the family grieve for her.

### Act 5

**Act V, Scene 1:** Balthasar arrives in Mantua and tells Romeo that Juliet has died. Romeo immediately plans to join her and buy a poison from an apothecary.

**Act V, Scene 2:** Friar John reports to Friar Lawrence that he has been unable to deliver Lawrence's letter to Romeo. Lawrence sends John to fetch a crow bar, planning to open the vault and take Juliet into hiding in his own cell until Romeo can be summoned.

**Act V, Scene 3:** Paris visits Juliet's tomb at night. Romeo appears with Balthasar, whom he sends away with a letter to Montague. Paris steps forth to challenge him. They fight, and Romeo kills Paris. Romeo then enters the crypt, drinks the poison, and dies. Friar Lawrence arrives tells Juliet what has happened and begs her to flee. She refuses and stays. She kisses her dead lover and stabs herself with his dagger. The watchmen appear, arresting Balthasar and the Friar as the Prince arrives, followed by both families. The Friar explains what has happened, and his tale is confirmed by Balthasar and by Romeo's letter to his father. Montague and Capulet make peace and vow to erect golden statues of the two lovers.

## Historical context

**Queen Elizabeth I** – She was queen while Shakespeare was writing, and supported him. Elizabeth I made Protestantism the official religion of England, which angered many Catholics, and led to much conflict. Shakespeare may be referencing this in 'Romeo and Juliet', with the two warring families.

**Patriarchy** – patriarchal societies are ones where men are dominant, and have control over women e.g. by choosing who they would marry.

**Nurses** – employed by wealthy families to feed and care for their children.

**The Humours** – Elizabethans believed the body contained four 'humours': blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. The amount you had of each determined your personality. People with too much phlegm are emotional. People with too much blood are irresponsible and gluttonous. People with too much yellow bile are violent and vengeful. People with too much black bile are depressed and self-centred.

**Fate** - the belief that your life is mapped out for you, or 'written in the stars'. Many Elizabethans believed God decided your fate, and that astrology could help you identify your course in life.

**Bubonic Plague/Black Death** – a plague that killed many people. Sufferers were quarantined in their houses, with a red 'X' painted on the door, and left to die.

## Techniques and Terminology

**Prologue** – sets up the story and foreshadows events.

**Foreshadowing** – when an author drops hints about what will happen through language or symbolism.

**Dramatic irony** – when an audience knows something the characters do not.

**Symbolism** – when an image represents an idea, e.g. light symbolises happiness, flowers symbolise youth etc.

**Double meaning** – when a word can be read to mean two things e.g. 'grave' = serious or grave stone.

**Personification** – when an object is given human qualities

**Rhyming Couplets** – two lines next to each other that rhyme with each other, often used for dramatic impact.

Critical Vocabulary		Key Themes
<p><b>Shakespeare presents the Montagues and their supporters as...</b></p> <p><u>Romeo</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Melancholic</b> – someone who is prone to moping and being depressed.</li> <li><b>Quixotic</b> – extremely idealistic: unrealistic and impractical.</li> <li><b>Ardent</b> – enthusiastic and passionate.</li> </ol> <p><u>Benvolio</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Appeasing</b>- someone who tries to pacify others.</li> <li><b>Sincere</b> - honest and genuine.</li> <li><b>Stalwart</b> – loyal and reliable.</li> </ol> <p><u>Mercutio</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Anarchic</b> – unruly and chaotic.</li> <li><b>Impulsive</b> – someone who acts on a whim, without thinking.</li> <li><b>Precocious</b> – someone who ‘shows off’ their intelligence arrogantly.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Shakespeare presents the Capulets and their supporters as...</b></p> <p><u>Juliet</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Idealistic</b> – someone who believes whole-heartedly in something, even if it is unrealistic.</li> <li><b>Ingenuous</b> – innocent, naïve and unworldly.</li> <li><b>Resolute</b> – someone who has made their mind up and whose opinion cannot be changed.</li> </ol> <p><u>Tybalt</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Volatile</b> – someone who could explode at any moment.</li> <li><b>Tempestuous</b> – someone who is unpredictable and has many conflicting emotions.</li> <li><b>Righteous</b> – someone who believes what they are doing is morally justifiable.</li> </ol> <p><u>Nurse</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Maternal</b> – motherly.</li> <li><b>Submissive</b> – will bend to a dominant authority and ‘do what they are told’</li> <li><b>Uncouth</b> – uncivilised and uncultured, potentially vulgar.</li> </ol>	<p>Conflict</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Fate</p> <p>Loyalty</p> <p>Family</p> <p>Religion</p> <p>Love</p> <p>Hatred</p> <p>Violence</p> <p>Death</p>

Key Quotations		Key characters
<p><u>Prologue</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘Two households, both alike in dignity’</li> <li>‘Ancient grudge’</li> <li>‘A pair of star-cross’d lovers’ with a ‘death-mark’d love’</li> </ol> <p><u>Act 1</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Benvolio:</b> ‘I do but keep the peace’ (Sc. 1)</li> <li><b>Lord Capulet, to Paris:</b> ‘let two more summers wither in their pride’ (Sc. 2)</li> <li><b>Tybalt, about Romeo:</b> ‘To strike him dead I hold it not a sin’ (Sc. 5)</li> <li><b>Romeo, about Juliet:</b> ‘she doth teach the torches to burn bright’ (Sc. 5)</li> <li><b>Juliet, about Romeo:</b> ‘if he be married, /My grave is like to be my wedding bed.’(Sc. 5)</li> </ol> <p><u>Act 2</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Juliet, about Romeo:</b> ‘Tis but thy name that is my enemy’ (Sc. 2)</li> <li><b>Friar Lawrence:</b> ‘This alliance may so happy prove to turn your household rancour to pure love’ (Sc. 3)</li> <li><b>Friar Lawrence:</b> ‘These violent delights have violent ends’ (Sc. 6)</li> </ol>	<p><u>Act 3</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tybalt, to Romeo:</b> ‘thou art a villain’ (Sc. 1)</li> <li><b>Mercutio:</b> ‘a plague o’ both your houses’ (Sc. 1)</li> <li><b>Mercutio:</b> ‘ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man.’ (Sc. 1)</li> <li><b>Romeo:</b> ‘O, I am fortune’s fool!’ (Sc. 1)</li> <li><b>Lord Capulet, about Juliet:</b> ‘I think she will be ruled in all respects by me’ (Sc. 4)</li> <li><b>Lady Capulet, about Juliet:</b> ‘I would the fool were married to her grave’ (Sc. 5)</li> <li><b>Lord Capulet, about Juliet:</b> ‘Hang thee young baggage, disobedient wretch!’ (Sc. 5)</li> <li><b>The Nurse, to Juliet, about Paris:</b> ‘I think it best you married with the County’ (Sc. 5)</li> </ol> <p><u>Act 4</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Juliet, to Friar Lawrence:</b> ‘I long to die if what thou speak’st speak not of remedy’</li> <li><b>Lord Capulet, about Juliet:</b> ‘Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir’</li> <li><b>Lord Capulet:</b> ‘with my child my joys are buried’</li> </ol> <p><u>Act 5</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Romeo:</b> ‘here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes/ This vault a feasting presence full of light.’</li> <li><b>Prince:</b> ‘all are punish’d’</li> <li><b>Capulet:</b> ‘O brother Montague, give me thy hand’</li> </ol>	<p><u>Montagues</u></p> <p><b>Romeo</b> – age unknown, anywhere between 16 and 21</p> <p><b>Benvolio</b> – Romeo’s cousin</p> <p><b>Lord and Lady Montague</b> – Romeo’s parents.</p> <p><b>Abraham</b> - servant</p> <p><b>Balthasar</b> – servant</p> <p><u>Capulets</u></p> <p><b>Juliet</b> –age 13 in the play</p> <p><b>Tybalt</b> – Juliet’s cousin</p> <p><b>Lord and Lady Capulet</b> – Juliet’s parents</p> <p><b>Gregory</b> – servant</p> <p><b>Sampson</b> – servant</p> <p><u>Others</u></p> <p><b>Rosaline</b> – a nun, Romeo is in love with her before Juliet.</p> <p><b>Prince Escalus</b> – ruler of Verona</p> <p><b>Mercutio</b> – related to Prince, friends with Romeo</p> <p><b>Count Paris</b> – related to Prince, betrothed to Juliet</p> <p><b>Friar Lawrence</b> – friends with Romeo</p> <p><b>The Nurse</b> – works for the Capulets, Juliet’s confidante</p>

