Name: Date:

Act I



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| **Directions:** Answer the following questions as you read through Act I of *Romeo & Juliet*. Answer in complete sentences on a separate sheet of white lined paper; provide page numbers and quotes where noted to support your responses. |

Scene i:

1. Our first introduction to Benvolio comes when he says: Part, fools! Put up your swords; you know not what you do” (Shakespeare 3). What do these words reveal about his character?
2. Our first impression of Tybalt occurs when he states: “What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word, as I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee: Have at thee, coward!” (Shakespeare 4) What do these words reveal about his character?
3. What is the tone of the Prince’s speech on page 4? In these lines, he makes a new decree[[1]](#footnote-1). What is it, and why is it important?
4. When we first meet Romeo he shows all the signs of a Petrarchan Lover—someone who is in love with the idea of being in love. How does Romeo act?
5. When describing his feelings to Benvolio, Romeo uses oxymoron’s—pairs of contradictory words. Why does he speak in contradictions and paradoxes[[2]](#footnote-2)?
6. We then learn that Romeo is suffering from unrequited love—he loves someone who does not love him back. What suggestion does Benvolio make to Romeo to help him get over is unrequited love for Rosaline?

Scene ii:

1. In this scene, Lord Capulet talks to Paris about marrying his daughter Juliet. What two reasons does he give for not wanting Juliet to marry at this time?
2. On what condition will Lord Capulet agree to Juliet’s marriage to Paris? What does this reveal about Lord Capulet’s love for his daughter?
3. From the servant who cannot read we learn that Rosaline, with who Romeo believes he is in love, will be at the Capulet party. Why does this excite Benvolio? What is his plan?
4. Explain Benvolio’s following analogy: “Compare [Rosaline’s] face with some that I shall show, And I will make thee think they swan a crow” (Shakespeare 11).
5. Why does Romeo agree to go to the party?
6. What coincidence takes place in this scene? Explain what theme is being developed.

Scene iii:

1. In this scene, Lady Capulet is informing Juliet and her nurse of Count Paris’ proposal of marriage. What is the nurse’s relationship with Juliet, and how would you describe the nurses’ personality?
2. At the bottom of page 13, what is the nurse’s one wish for Juliet and why?
3. When Lady Capulet asks Juliet how she feels about being married, what is Juliet’s answer, and what does it reveal about her character?
4. The nurse and Lady Capulet are both excited and pleased by Paris’ proposal but for different reasons. The nurse says Paris is “a man of wax” and at the end of the scene encourages Juliet to “Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days” (Shakespeare 15). What does the nurse see in Paris, and what does it reveal about her attitude toward love and marriage?
5. Lady Capulet composes a conceit—a conceit is an extended, exaggerated comparison or metaphor between two unlike things—in this case Paris and a book that needs to be bound. What does Lady Capulet see in Paris that would make him a good match for Juliet? What is Lady Capulet’s attitude toward love and marriage?
6. Explain Juliet’s answer to her mother when asked if she can love Paris. What does it reveal about her knowledge of being in love? What is her attitude toward love and marriage?

Scene iv

1. Why does Romeo feel uneasy about going to the party? What dream-like premonition has he had?
2. What decision does Romeo make, and what is the thematic importance of this decision?

Scene v

1. We learn from Romeo’s soliloquy—a speech delivered while the speaker is alone, calculated to inform the audience of what is passing in the character’s mind—that he is struck by love at first sight when he sees Juliet at the party. Paraphrase Romeo’s speech. To what does he compare Juliet?
2. How does this speech about love for Juliet compare to his speeches about being in love with Rosaline?
3. Tybalt recognizes Romeo’s voice and tries to start to a fight. What two reasons does Lord Capulet give for stopping him? However, what threat does Tybalt make as he agrees to withdraw?
4. Dramatic Irony is when the audience knows something the characters do not. What is ironic about Juliet’s line: “Go ask his name. If he be married, my grave is like to be my wedding bed” (Shakespeare 22).

1. A formal and authoritative order, especially one having the force of law [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expresses a possible truth [↑](#footnote-ref-2)