Do our differences define us?

Explore the Big Question as you read Act II of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. Take notes on how characters handle differences they perceive between the two feuding families.

**CLOSE READING FOCUS**

**Key Ideas and Details: Read in Sentences**

Shakespeare’s plays often include long passages of poetry. When you encounter such a long passage, *read in sentences* and pause according to the punctuation instead of at the end of each line. Doing so will clarify the meaning of each sentence, thus allowing you to better understand the passage and the action of the play as a whole.

**Craft and Structure: Blank Verse**

Blank verse is unrhymed poetry written in a meter call iambic pentameter. A line of iambic pentameter has five stressed syllables, each preceded by an unstressed syllable, as in this example:

*Bu˘t sóf! Wh˘at lig´ht thro˘ugh yóndér wíndów bréaks?*

*I ís th˘e eást, an Júlíët ís th˘e sún!*

In all of Shakespeare’s plays, including *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, high-ranking, aristocratic characters speak in blank verse. By contrast, comic characters or those of low rank usually speak in prose, which is writing that is not divided into poetic lines and does not follow a specific meter. These two distinct styles clarify characters’ social status and contribute to the tone and mood of their interactions.

**Vocabulary**

The words below are critical to understanding the text that follows. Copy the words into your notebook. Which word contains a prefix meaning “between”? Explain how this prefix contributes to the word’s meaning.

- procure
- predominant
- intercession
- sallow
- lamentable
- unwieldy
CLOSE READING MODEL

The passage below is from Act II of William Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. The annotations to the right of the passage show ways in which you can read in sentences and analyze blank verse.

from *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act II*

Romeo. She speaks.

O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o’er my head,
As is a wingèd messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturnèd wond’ring eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Juliet. O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I’ll no longer be a Capulet.

Romeo. [Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Juliet. Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What’s Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title.

Romeo, doff thy name;
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Blank Verse

1 The first highlighted line is perfect iambic pentameter. However, in the second highlighted line, Shakespeare breaks the perfect meter slightly. This variation creates a subtle emphasis on the words *glorious* and *o’er* (or “over” in modern English).

Blank Verse

2 Both Romeo and Juliet speak in blank verse because they are aristocratic characters. This famous speech in which Juliet wishes Romeo were not a Montague deviates only slightly from perfect iambic pentameter.

Read in Sentences

3 To better understand Juliet’s reasoning, do not pause at the ends of lines but follow the punctuation. She is saying that the name of Montague is not essential to Romeo in the same way as are his hands, feet, arms, and face. Even if he had a different name, he would still be the same person.
Do our differences define us?
Act I reveals a bitter, long-standing feud between the Montagues and the Capulets. It also introduces the play’s title characters, who meet at a feast and immediately fall in love, only to discover that they come from opposing sides of the feud.

Based on what you have learned about the personalities of Romeo and Juliet, how do you expect them to respond to their love for each other and to the problems it poses? How do you think their families will react?

[Enter Chorus.]

CHORUS. Now old desire\(^1\) doth in his deathbed lie,  
And young affection gapes to be his heir;\(^2\)  
That fair\(^3\) for which love groaned for and would die,  
With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair.

Now Romeo is beloved and loves again,  
Alike bewitchèd\(^4\) by the charm of looks;  
But to his foe supposed he must complain,\(^5\)  
And she steal love’s sweet bait from fearful hooks.

1. old desire Romeo’s love for Rosaline.
2. young . . . heir Romeo’s new love for Juliet is eager to replace his love for Rosaline.
3. fair beautiful woman (Rosaline).
4. Alike bewitchèd Both Romeo and Juliet are enchanted.
5. complain address his words of love.
Being held a foe, he may not have access
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new belovèd anywhere;
But passion lends them power, time means to meet,
Temp’ring extremities with extreme sweet.6

[Exit.]

Scene i. Near Capulet’s orchard.

[Enter Romeo alone.]

Romeo. Can I go forward when my heart is here?
   Turn back, dull earth,¹ and find thy center² out.

[Enter Benvolio with Mercutio. Romeo retires.]

Benvolio. Romeo! My cousin Romeo! Romeo!

Mercutio. He is wise.
   And, on my life, hath stol’n him home to bed.

Benvolio. He ran this way and leapt this orchard wall.
   Call, good Mercutio.

Mercutio. Nay, I’ll conjure³ too.
   Romeo! Humors! Madman! Passion! Lover!
   Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;
   Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied!
   Cry but “Ay me!” Pronounce but “love” and “dove”;
   Speak to my gossip⁴ Venus one fair word,
   One nickname for her purblind son and heir,
   Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so true
   When King Cophetua loved the beggar maid!
   He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;
   The ape is dead,⁵ and I must conjure him.
   I conjure thee by Rosaline’s bright eyes,
   By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,
   By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
   And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
   That in thy likeness thou appear to us!

Benvolio. And if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

Mercutio. This cannot anger him. ’Twould anger him
   To raise a spirit in his mistress’ circle
   Of some strange nature, letting it there stand
   Till she had laid it and conjured it down.

1. dull earth lifeless body.
2. center heart, or possibly soul (Juliet).
3. conjure recite a spell to make Romeo appear.
4. gossip merry old lady.
5. The ape is dead Romeo, like a trained monkey, seems to be playing.

Blank Verse
Based on the meter of this speech, how can you tell that Mercutio is an aristocratic character?
That were some spite; my invocation
Is fair and honest; in his mistress’ name,
I conjure only but to raise up him.

30 **Benvolio.** Come, he hath hid himself among these trees
To be consorted\(^6\) with the humorous\(^7\) night.
Blind is his love and best befits the dark.

**Mercutio.** If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar\(^8\) tree
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.
O, Romeo, that she were, O that she were
An open *et cetera*, thou a pop’rin pear!
Romeo, good night. I’ll to my truckle bed;\(^9\)
This field bed is too cold for me to sleep.
Come, shall we go?

**Benvolio.** Go then, for ’tis in vain
To seek him here that means not to be found.

*Exit with others.*

**Scene ii. Capulet’s orchard.**

**Romeo.** [Coming forward] He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

*[Enter Juliet at a window.]*

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.
Be not her maid, since she is envious.
Her vestal livery\(^1\) is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.
It is my lady! O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold; ’tis not to me she speaks.
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres\(^2\) till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

6. consorted associated.
7. humorous humid; moody, like a lover.
8. medlar applelike fruit.
9. truckle bed trundlebed, placed under a larger bed when not in use.

Blank Verse
Which line in Romeo’s speech breaks the pattern of five stressed syllables per line?

1. livery clothing or costume worn by a servant.
2. spheres orbits.

Comprehension
Whom does Romeo see at the window?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See how she leans her cheek upon that hand,
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

**Juliet.**  
Ay me!

**Romeo.**  
She speaks.
O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o’er my head,
As is a wingèd messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturnèd wond’ring eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

**Juliet.**  
O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I’ll no longer be a Capulet.
**Romeo.** [Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

**Juliet.** Tis but thy name that is my enemy.  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? It is not hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.

So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;  
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

**Romeo.** I take thee at thy word.  
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

**Juliet.** What man art thou, thus bescreened in night,  
So stumblest on my counsel?

**Romeo.** By a name  
I know not how to tell thee who I am.  
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself  
Because it is an enemy to thee.  
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

**Juliet.** My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words  
Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.  
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

**Romeo.** Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

**Juliet.** How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?  
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,  
And the place death, considering who thou art,  
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

**Romeo.** With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls;  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

**Juliet.** If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

**Romeo.** Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye  
Than twenty of their swords! Look thou but sweet,  
And I am proof against their enmity.
Juliet. I would not for the world they saw thee here.

Romeo. I have night’s cloak to hide me from their eyes; And but thou love me, let them find me here. My life were better ended by their hate Than death proroguèd, wanting of thy love.

Juliet. By whose direction found’st thou out this place?

Romeo. By love, that first did prompt me to inquire. He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes. I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea, I should adventure for such merchandise.

Juliet. Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face; Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight. Fain would I dwell on form—fain, fain deny What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!

Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “Ay”; And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear’st, Thou mayst prove false. At lovers’ perjuries, They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo, If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

Or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won, I’ll frown and be perverse and say thee nay, So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world. In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond, And therefore thou mayst think my havior light; But trust me, gentleman, I’ll prove more true Than those that have more cunning to be strange. I should have been more strange, I must confess, But that thou overheard’st, ere I was ware, My true-love passion. Therefore pardon me, And not impute this yielding to light love, Which the dark night hath so discoverèd.

Romeo. Lady, by yonder blessèd moon I vow, That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

Juliet. O, swear not by the moon, th’ inconstant moon, That monthly changes in her circle orb, Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.
Romeo. What shall I swear by?

Juliet. Do not swear at all; 
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self, 
Which is the god of my idolatry, 
And I'll believe thee.

Romeo. If my heart's dear love—

Juliet. Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee, 
I have no joy of this contract tonight. 
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden; 
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be 
Ere one can say it lightens. Sweet, good night! 
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath, 
May prove a beauteous flow'r when next we meet. 
Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest 
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

Romeo. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Juliet. What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

Romeo. Th'echange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.
Juliet. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it; And yet I would it were to give again.

130 Romeo. Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

Juliet. But to be frank⁴¹ and give it thee again. And yet I wish but for the thing I have. My bounty⁴² is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep: the more I give to thee, The more I have, for both are infinite.

[Nurse calls within.]

I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu! Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true. Stay but a little, I will come again. [Exit.]

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**LITERATURE IN CONTEXT**

**Culture Connection**

**Falconry**

When Juliet longs for “a falc’ners voice,” she is referring to someone who practices falconry, the sport of hunting with falcons. Falcons are swift, hawk-like birds of prey. The falconer trains the bird to respond to a combination of physical and vocal commands.

During Shakespeare’s time, one’s rank in society determined the kind of bird one could own:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Type of Bird</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>Gyr falcon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince</td>
<td>Peregrine falcon (male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knight</td>
<td>Saker falcon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squire</td>
<td>Lanner falcon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady</td>
<td>Merlin (female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeoman (landowner)</td>
<td>Goshawk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servants, children</td>
<td>Kestrel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Connect to the Literature**

Why do you think Juliet wishes Romeo would respond to her voice as a falcon does to the falconer’s commands?
Romeo. O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.\(^\text{23}\)

[Enter Juliet again.]

Juliet. Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent\(^\text{24}\) of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,
By one that I’ll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I’ll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Nurse. [Within] Madam!

Juliet. I come anon.—But if thou meanest not well,
I do beseech thee—

Nurse. [Within] Madam!

Juliet. By and by\(^\text{25}\) I come.—
To cease thy strife\(^\text{26}\) and leave me to my grief.
Tomorrow will I send.

Romeo. So thrive my soul—

Juliet. A thousand times good night!

[Exit.]

Romeo. A thousand times the worse, to want thy light!
Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books;
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

[Enter Juliet again.]

Juliet. Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falc’ner’s voice
To lure this tassel gentle\(^\text{27}\) back again!
Bondage is hoarse\(^\text{28}\) and may not speak aloud,
Else would I tear the cave where Echo\(^\text{29}\) lies
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
With repetition of “My Romeo!”

Romeo. It is my soul that calls upon my name.
How silver-sweet sound lovers’ tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

Juliet. Romeo!

Romeo. My sweet?

Juliet. What o’clock tomorrow
Shall I send to thee?
Romeo. By the hour of nine.

Juliet. I will not fail. Tis twenty year till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Romeo. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Juliet. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there, Rememb’ring how I love thy company.

Romeo. And I’ll stay, to have thee still forget, Forgetting any other home but this.

Juliet. ’Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone— And yet no farther than a wanton’s bird, That lets it hop a little from his hand, Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves. And with a silken thread plucks it back again, So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Romeo. I would I were thy bird.

Juliet. Sweet, so would I.
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow That I shall say good night till it be morrow. [Exit.]

Romeo. Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast! Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest! Hence will I to my ghostly friar’s close cell, His help to crave and my dear hap to tell. [Exit.]

Scene iii. Friar Lawrence’s cell.

[Enter Friar Lawrence alone, with a basket.]

Friar. The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night, Check’ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light; And fleckèd darkness like a drunkard reels From forth day’s path and Titan’s burning wheels. Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye The day to cheer and night’s dank dew to dry, I must upfill this osier cage of ours With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers. The earth that’s nature’s mother is her tomb. What is her burying grave, that is her womb; And from her womb children of divers kind. We sucking on her natural bosom find, Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different.

O, mickle⁶ is the powerful grace⁷ that lies
In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities;
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good but, strained⁸ from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth,⁹ stumbling on abuse.
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And vice sometime by action dignified.

[Enter Romeo.]

Within the infant rind¹⁰ of this weak flower
Poison hath residence and medicine power;¹¹
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;¹²
Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.¹³
Two such opposed kings encamp them still¹⁴
In man as well as herbs—grace and rude will;
And where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker¹⁵ death eats up that plant.

ROMEO. Good morrow, father.

FRIAR.

Benedicite!¹⁶
What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?
Young son, it argues a distempered head¹⁷
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed.
Care keeps his watch in every old man’s eye,
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;
But where unbruised youth with unstuffed¹⁸ brain
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign,
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
Thou art uproused with some distem’rature;¹⁹
Or if not so, then here I hit it right—
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

ROMEO. That last is true. The sweeter rest was mine.

FRIAR. God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?

ROMEO. With Rosaline, my ghostly father? No.
I have forgot that name and that name’s woe.

FRIAR. That’s my good son! But where hast thou been then?

ROMEO. I’ll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.
I have been feasting with mine enemy,
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me
That’s by me wounded. Both our remedies

6. mickle great.
7. grace divine power.
8. strained turned away.
9. Revolts . . . birth conflicts with its real purpose.
10. infant rind tender skin.
11. and medicine power and medicinal quality has power.
12. with . . . part with that quality—odor—revives each part of the body.
13. stays . . . heart kills (stops the working of the five senses along with the heart).
14. still always.
15. canker destructive caterpillar.
16. Benedicite! God bless you!
17. distempered head troubled mind.
18. unstuffed not filled with cares.
19. distem’rature illness.

Vocabulary

predominant (prë däm’nt) adj. having greater frequency, strength, or influence

Blank Verse
What sets the Friar’s lines apart from normal blank verse?

Comprehension
What plan do Romeo and Juliet make for the following day?
Within thy help and holy physic\textsuperscript{20} lies. I bear no hatred, blessed man, for, lo, My \textit{intercession} likewise steads my foe.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Friar.} Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.\textsuperscript{22}
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Romeo.} Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,
And all combined, save\textsuperscript{24} what thou must combine
By holy marriage. When and where and how
We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us today.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Friar.} Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here!
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine\textsuperscript{25}
Hath washed thy \textit{sallow} cheeks for Rosaline!
How much salt water thrown away in waste
To season love, that of it doth not taste!
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in mine ancient ears.
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.
And art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence then:
Women may fall\textsuperscript{26} when there's no strength\textsuperscript{27} in men.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Romeo.} Thou chidst me oft for loving Rosaline.
\textbf{Friar.} For doting,\textsuperscript{28} not for loving, pupil mine.
\textbf{Romeo.} And badst\textsuperscript{29} me bury love.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Friar.} Not in a grave
To lay one in, another out to have.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Romeo.} I pray thee chide me not. Her I love now
Doth grace\textsuperscript{30} for grace and love for love allow.\textsuperscript{31}
The other did not so.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Friar.} O, she knew well
Thy love did read by rote, that could not spell.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{center}
But come, young waverer, come go with me.
In one respect I'll thy assistant be;
For this alliance may so happy prove
To turn your households' rancor\(^{33}\) to pure love.

**Romeo.** O, let us hence! I stand on\(^{34}\) sudden haste.

**Friar.** Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast. [Exit all.]

**Scene iv. A street.**

[Enter Benvolio and Mercutio.]

**Mercutio.** Where the devil should this Romeo be? Came he not home tonight?

**Benvolio.** Not to his father's. I spoke with his man.

**Mercutio.** Why, that same pale hardhearted wench, that Rosaline,
torments him so that he will sure run mad.

**Benvolio.** Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.

**Mercutio.** A challenge, on my life.

**Benvolio.** Romeo will answer it.

**Mercutio.** Any man that can write may answer a letter.

**Benvolio.** Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares,
being dared.

**Mercutio.** Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead: stabbed with a white wench's black eye; run through the ear with a love song; the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft;\(^{1}\) and is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

**Benvolio.** Why, what is Tybalt?

**Mercutio.** More than Prince of Cats;\(^{2}\) O, he's the courageous captain of compliments.\(^{3}\) He fights as you sing pricksong—keeps time, distance, and proportion; he rests his minim rests,\(^{5}\) one, two, and the third in your bosom! The very butcher of a silk button,\(^{6}\) a duelist, a duelist! A gentleman of the very first house,\(^{7}\) of the first and second cause.\(^{8}\) Ah, the immortal passado! The punto reverso! The hay!\(^{9}\)

**Benvolio.** The what?

**Mercutio.** The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting...

---

33. **rancor** hatred.
34. **stand on** insist on.

**Blank Verse**

In what way is Mercutio's and Benvolio's speech in this scene different from what it was earlier in Act II?

1. **blind bow-boy's butt-shaft** Cupid's blunt arrow.
2. **Prince of Cats** Tybalt, or a variation of it, is the name of the cat in medieval stories of Reynard the Fox.
3. **captain of compliments** master of formal behavior.
4. **as you sing pricksong** with attention to precision.
5. **rests ... rests** observes all formalities.
6. **button** exact spot on his opponent's shirt.
7. **first house** finest school of fencing.
8. **the first and second cause** reasons that would cause a gentleman to challenge another to a duel.
9. **passado! ... punto reverso! ... hay!** lunge . . . backhanded stroke . . . home thrust.

**Comprehension**

What does the Friar think Romeo and Juliet's love will do for the Capulets and Montagues?
Mercutio’s Allusions

The women Mercutio names as he taunts Romeo are famous figures in European literature and history. Laura was the name of a woman to whom the Italian poet Petrarch addressed much of his love poetry. Dido, according to Roman mythology, was the queen of Carthage and love interest of Aeneas, the founder of Rome. Cleopatra was the famed Egyptian queen with whom Julius Caesar and later Mark Antony fell in love. Helen, Hero, and Thisbe are all legendary beauties in Greek mythology. Mercutio mocks Romeo by saying that Romeo thinks none of them compare with Rosaline.

Connect to the Literature

Why is Mercutio’s use of grand references and exaggerated language a fitting way to tease Romeo?
50 **Romeo.** Pardon, good Mercutio. My business was great, and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

**Mercutio.** That’s as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.\(^15\)

**Romeo.** Meaning, to curtsy.

55 **Mercutio.** Thou hast most kindly hit it.

**Romeo.** A most courteous exposition.

**Mercutio.** Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

**Romeo.** Pink for flower.

**Mercutio.** Right.

**Romeo.** Why, then is my pump\(^16\) well-flowered.

**Mercutio.** Sure wit, follow me this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump, that, when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.\(^17\)

**Romeo.** O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!\(^18\)

**Mercutio.** Come between us, good Benvolio! My wits faints.

**Romeo.** Swits and spurs, swits and spurs; or I’ll cry a match.\(^19\)

**Mercutio.** Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase, I am done; for thou hast more of the wild goose in one of thy wits than, I am sure, I have in my whole five. Was I with you there for the goose?

**Romeo.** Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast not there for the goose.

**Mercutio.** I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

**Romeo.** Nay, good goose, bite not!

**Mercutio.** Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting;\(^20\) it is a most sharp sauce.

**Romeo.** And is it not, then, well served in to a sweet goose?

**Mercutio.** O, here’s a wit of cheveril,\(^21\) that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

**Romeo.** I stretch it out for that word “broad,” which added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.
Mercutio. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature. For this driveling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

Benvolio. Stop there, stop there!

Mercutio. Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.25

Benvolio. Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

Mercutio. O, thou art deceived! I would have made it short; for I was come to the whole depth of my tale, and meant indeed to occupy the argument no longer.

Romeo. Here’s goodly gear!27

[Enter Nurse and her Man, Peter.]

Merceutio. Two, two! A shirt and a smock.28

Nurse. Peter!

Peter. Anon.

Nurse. My fan, Peter.

Mercutio. Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan’s the fairer face.

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mercutio. God ye good-den, fair gentlewoman.

Nurse. Is it good-den?

Mercutio. Tis no less, I tell ye; for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

Nurse. Out upon you! What a man are you!

Romeo. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made, himself to mar.

Nurse. By my troth, it is well said. “For himself to mar,” quoth ‘a? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

Romeo. I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you sought him. I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse.
Nurse. You say well.

Mercutio. Yea, is the worst well? Very well took,30 i’ faith! Wisely, wisely.

Nurse. If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence31 with you.

Benvolio. She will endite him to some supper.

Mercutio. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Romeo. What hast thou found?

Mercutio. No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

[He walks by them and sings.]

   An old hare hoar,
   And an old hare hoar,
       Is very good meat in Lent;
   But a hare that is hoar
   Is too much for a score
   When it hoars ere it be spent.

30. took understood.

31. confidence Nurse means “conference.”

Comprehension
Who interrupts Romeo and his friends to ask about Romeo?
Romeo, will you come to your father’s? We’ll to dinner thither.

**Romeo.** I will follow you.

**Mercutio.** Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, [singing] “Lady, lady, lady.”

*Exit Mercutio, Benvolio.*

**Nurse.** I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery?

**Romeo.** A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk and will speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month.

**Nurse.** And a speak anything against me, I’ll take him down, and a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I’ll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skainsmates. And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure!

**Peter.** I saw no man use you at his pleasure. If I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

**Nurse.** Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave! Pray you, sir, a word; and, as I told you, my young lady bid me inquire you out. What she bid me say, I will keep to myself; but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her in a fool’s paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behavior, as they say; for the gentlewoman is young; and therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

**Romeo.** Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee—

**Nurse.** Good heart, and i’ faith I will tell her as much. Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman.

**Romeo.** What wilt thou tell her, nurse? Thou dost not mark me.

**Nurse.** I will tell her, sir, that you do protest, which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.
Romeo. Bid her devise
   Some means to come to shrift\textsuperscript{39} this afternoon;
   And there she shall at Friar Lawrence' cell
   Be shrived and married. Here is for thy pains.

Nurse. No, truly, sir; not a penny.

Romeo. Go to! I say you shall.

Nurse. This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

Romeo. And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall.
   Within this hour my man shall be with thee
   And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair.\textsuperscript{40}
   Which to the high topgallant\textsuperscript{41} of my joy
   Must be my convoy\textsuperscript{42} in the secret night.

Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit\textsuperscript{43} thy pains.
Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse. Now God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

Romeo. What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

Nurse. Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,
   Two may keep counsel, putting one away?\textsuperscript{44}

Romeo. Warrant thee my man's as true as steel.

Nurse. Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord,
   Lord! When 'twas a little prating\textsuperscript{45} thing—O, there is a
   nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife
   aboard;\textsuperscript{46} but she, good soul, had as lieve\textsuperscript{47} see a toad,
   a very toad, as see him. I anger her sometimes, and tell
   her that Paris is the properer man; but I'll warrant
   you, when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout\textsuperscript{48}
   in the versal world.\textsuperscript{49} Doth not rosemary and Romeo
   begin both with a letter?

Romeo. Ay, nurse; what of that? Both with an R.

Nurse. Ah, mocker! That's the dog's name.\textsuperscript{50} R is for the—
   No; I know it begins with some other letter; and she
   hath the prettiest sententious\textsuperscript{51} of it, of you and rosemary,
   that it would do you good to hear it.

Romeo. Commend me to thy lady.

Nurse. Ay, a thousand times. [Exit Romeo.] Peter!

Peter. Anon.

Nurse. Before, and apace.\textsuperscript{52} [Exit, after Peter.]
Scene v. Capulet's orchard.

[Enter Juliet.]

**Juliet.** The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse; In half an hour she promised to return. Perchance she cannot meet him. That's not so. O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts, Which ten times faster glides than the sun's beams Driving back shadows over low'ring
dills. Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw Love,
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings. Now is the sun upon the highmost hill Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve Is three long hours; yet she is not come. Had she affections and warm youthful blood, She would be as swift in motion as a ball; My words would bandy her
to my sweet love, And his to me. But old folks, many feign as they were dead— Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

[Enter Nurse and Peter.]

**Nurse.** O God, she comes! O honey nurse, what news? Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

**Juliet.** Now, good sweet nurse—O Lord, why lookest thou sad? Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily; If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news By playing it to me with so sour a face.

**Nurse.** I am aweary, give me leave
dawhile. Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunce have I!

**Juliet.** I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news. Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good nurse, speak.

**Nurse.** Jesu, what haste? Can you not stay a while? Do you not see that I am out of breath?

**Juliet.** How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath To say to me that thou art out of breath? The excuse that thou dost make in this delay Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse. Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.\(^7\)
Let me be satisfied, 'tis good or bad?

**Nurse.** Well, you have made a simple\(^8\) choice; you know
not how to choose a man. Romeo? No, not he. Though
his face be better than any man’s, yet his leg excels all
men’s; and for a hand and a foot, and a body, though
they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare.
He is not the flower of courtesy, but, I'll warrant him,
as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench; serve God.
What, have you dined at home?

**Juliet.** No, no. But all this I did know before.
What says he of our marriage? What of that?

**Nurse.** Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back a\(^9\) t’other side—ah, my back, my back!
Beshrew\(^10\) your heart for sending me about
To catch my death with jauncing up and down!

**Juliet.** I’ faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

**Nurse.** Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a
courteous, and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant,
a virtuous—Where is your mother?

**Juliet.** Where is my mother? Why, she is within.
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!

“Your love says, like an honest gentleman,
‘Where is your mother?’”

**Nurse.** O God’s Lady dear!
Are you so hot?\(^11\) Marry come up, I trow.\(^12\)
Is this the poultice\(^13\) for my aching bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

**Juliet.** Here’s such a coil!\(^14\) Come, what says Romeo?

**Nurse.** Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

**Juliet.** I have.

**Nurse.** Then hie you hence to Friar Lawrence’ cell;
There stays a husband to make you a wife.

Now comes the wanton\(^15\) blood up in your cheeks:
They’ll be in scarlet straight at any news.
Hie you to church: I must another way,
To fetch a ladder, by which your love
Must climb a bird’s nest soon when it is dark.
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight:
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.
Go; I’ll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

**Juliet.** Hie to high fortune! Honest nurse, farewell.

[Exit all.]

**Scene vi. Friar Lawrence’s cell.**

[Enter Friar Lawrence and Romeo.]

**Friar.** So smile the heavens upon this holy act
That afterhours with sorrow chide us not!¹

**Romeo.** Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail² the exchange of joy
That one short minute gives me in her sight.
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare—
It is enough I may but call her mine.

**Friar.** These violent delights have violent ends
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,³
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately: long love doth so;
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

[Enter Juliet.]

Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot
Will ne’er wear out the everlasting flint.
A lover may bestride the gossamers
That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

Juliet. Good even to my ghostly confessor.

Friar. Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

4. confounds destroys.

5. flint stone.

6. gossamers spider webs.

7. vanity foolish things that cannot last.
Juliet. As much to him,\(^8\) else is his thanks too much.

Romeo. Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
25 Be heaped like mine, and that thy skill be more
To blazon it,\(^9\) then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbor air, and let rich music’s tongue
Unfold the imagined happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

Juliet. Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,
Brags of his substance, not of ornament.\(^{10}\)
They are but beggars that can count their worth;
But my true love is grown to such excess
I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

Friar. Come, come with me, and we will make short work,
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one. [Exit all.]

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**Language Study**

**Vocabulary** The words listed below appear in Act II of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*. Answer each question that follows. Then, explain your answer.

**predominant** intercession sallow lamentable unwieldy

1. What is the *predominant* feeling at a celebration?
2. How many people are needed for an *intercession* to occur?
3. Is a *sallow* complexion a sign of good health?
4. If a situation is *lamentable*, are people likely to be happy about it?
5. Is an *unwieldy* package something you would want to carry far?

**Word Study**

Part A Explain how the *Latin suffix -able* contributes to the meanings of the words *adorable*, *achievable*, and *arguable*. Consult a dictionary if necessary.

Part B Use the context of the sentences and what you know about the Latin suffix *-able* to explain your answer to each question.

1. Which is *perishable*, an oak tree or a diamond?
2. Are ancient scripts, such as hieroglyphics, *decipherable* by most modern readers?
Literary Analysis

Key Ideas and Details

1. (a) Where do Romeo and Juliet first mutually declare their love? (b) Interpret: What roles do darkness and light play in the scene? Support your answer with details from the text.

2. (a) What weakness in Romeo does the Friar point out before agreeing to help? (b) Compare and Contrast: How do the Friar’s motives differ from the couple’s motives? Explain your answer based on details from the text.

3. (a) For whom does Juliet wait in Act II, Scene v? (b) Analyze: What are her feelings as she waits? Explain your answer.

4. Read in Sentences (a) How many sentences are in lines 1–8 of Act II, Scene v? (b) Write a summary of these lines.

Craft and Structure

5. Blank Verse Using a chart like the one shown, rewrite the following two lines and indicate the pattern of accented (´) and unaccented (˘) syllables in each line. Then, identify the key words stressed in each line, and explain what meaning is conveyed: (a) ROMEO. Can I go forward when my heart is here? (b) JULIET. But my true love is grown to such excess.

6. Blank Verse (a) Identify the aristocratic and common characters in Act II based on whether they speak in blank verse. (b) Why might Shakespeare have chosen blank verse for the dialogue spoken by aristocrats? Support your answer with textual evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. (a) Evaluate: Based on conclusions you draw about the text, why do you think the love scene in Capulet’s garden is one of the most famous dramatic scenes in all literature? Explain and support your answer with details from the scene.

8. Do our differences define us? Have the differences between Romeo and Juliet become more or less defined as their story continues? Do those differences affect their relationship? Use details from the text to support your response.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

As you write and speak about The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, use the words related to differences that you explored on page 481 of this book.