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**Romeo and Juliet: Act 2 Study Guide**



**Act 2, Scene 1**

* Romeo doesn't want to leave the Capulet's property, so he ditches his friends and hides out in the orchard behind the Capulet house.
* Benvolio and Mercutio try to find him. Unaware that Romeo now has the hots for Juliet, they shout lots of filthy things about Rosaline hoping that Romeo will come out to defend Rosaline's honor. No such luck.
* Eventually they give up and head home.



**Act 2, Scene 2 (The Balcony Scene)**

1. Where is Romeo in the beginning of this scene? What is he doing?
2. What does Juliet mean when she asks, “Wherefore art thou Romeo?”
3. What does Juliet reveal about herself? Explain the dramatic irony in the scene.
4. Why is Juliet worried for Romeo’s safety?
5. Why is Juliet doubtful about this meeting with Romeo?
6. Who first brings up the idea of getting married? Why?
7. What concrete plans do Romeo and Juliet make?

Recap (Act 2, Scene 2):

* Romeo is wandering aimlessly around the Capulet backyard when guess-who appears on the balcony. "What light through yonder window breaks?" he asks.
* He then answers his own question. "It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!"
* Just when you think Romeo is cray-cray, Juliet is talking to herself, too. "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" she asks.
* You might wonder, "why is she asking where Romeo is?" Well, as it turns out, "Wherefore" doesn't mean "where." It means "why." Juliet is saying, "Why does the guy I love have to be a Montague?"
* Juliet goes on talking to herself about how amazing Romeo is.
* Romeo is smart enough to keep his mouth shut and listen. Finally, he can't resist anymore, and he calls out to her.
* Juliet is *super* embarrassed until she realizes that it's Romeo hiding in the bushes. This is bad news, because if her family finds Romeo, they'll kill him.
* Luckily, she gets over her shock fast enough to enjoy the most romantic love scene in the history of Western literature.
* There's lots of poetry, vows of love that sound a lot like religious worship, baffling language, and teenage melodrama.
* Then Juliet basically proposes to Romeo when she says "If that thy bent of love be honourable, / Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow." Translation: "If you love me and want to marry me, let me know ASAP."
* Romeo is game. They end up setting up a way to send messages the next day so they can plan the wedding. It does *not* involve overage on their parents' texting plan.
* Eventually, Romeo and Juliet run out of things to talk about and start babbling just so they don't have to leave each other—kind of a "You hang up," "No, you hang up," deal.
* But, in Shakespearian terms, "You hang up" is actually "Parting is such sweet sorrow / That I shall say goodnight till it be morrow."
* If this went down 400 years later, these kids would be running off to Vegas together but, this being a Shakespeare play, Juliet finally drags herself away to bed and Romeo hightails it off to Friar Laurence, his favorite priest, to figure out the wedding plans.

Text Message Conversation (Act 2, Scene 2)

Let’s say that that Romeo and Juliet happened today. They met each other at a party and exchanged phone numbers. What would their text message thread look like? Keep in mind, they’re not much older than you are right now. Use Act 2, Scene 2 as your guide. Who texts who first? How many times do they say good bye? Remember, text messages are usually short. Feel free to use abbreviations and omit parts of the scene if you don’t think they’re important.

* Use at least 15 texts.
* Use text language (and possibly emojis).
* Follow the story and dialogue of the characters in Act 2, Scene 2.
* Incorporate both characters’ voice and way of thinking into the texts.



Figurative Language (Act 2, Scene 2)

**Directions:** Identify what type of figurative language is being used in each example below and explain what the quote means.

* **Metaphor**—A comparison between unlike objects that does not use like or as.
	+ *Example*: She is a flower too delicate for the summer heat.
* **Simile**—A comparison between unlike objects that uses like or as.
	+ *Example*: He panted like a dog in the sun.
* **Personification**—Giving human characteristics to nonhuman objects.
	+ *Example*: The blank page beckoned me to spill ink across its white surface.

1. But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east and Juliet is the sun!

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2. Oh, speak again bright angel…

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3. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words of thy tongue’s utterings, yet I know the sound.

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4. With love’s light wings did I o’erperch these walls…

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5. There lies more peril in thine eyes than twenty of their swords.

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6. I have night’s cloak to hide me from their eyes.

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7. It is too rash…too like the lightening which doth cease to be ere can say it lightens.

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8. This bud of love, by summer’s ripening breath, may prove a beauteous flower.

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9. My bounty is a boundless as the sea, my love as deep.

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10. I would have thee gone, and yet no farther than a wanton’s bird that lets it hop a little from her hand like a poor prisoner in his twisted chains…

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**Act 2, Scene 3**

1. What does Friar Lawrence mean in his opening soliloquy?

“Now, before the sun comes up and burns away the dew, I have to fill this basket of mine with poisonous weeds and medicinal flowers. The Earth is nature’s mother and also nature’s tomb. Plants are born out of the Earth, and they are buried in the Earth when they die. From the Earth’s womb, many different sorts of plants and animals come forth, and the Earth provides her children with many excellent forms of nourishment. Everything nature creates has some special property, and each one is different. Herbs, plants, and stones possess great power. There is nothing on Earth that is so evil that it does not provide the earth with some special quality. And there is nothing that does not turn bad if it’s put to the wrong use and abused. Virtue turns to vice if it’s misused. Vice sometimes becomes virtue through the right activity” (Shakespeare 2.3.6-23).

1. Why does Friar Lawrence think Romeo has “sinned”?
2. Explain what Friar Lawrence meant by, “Young men’s love then lies/ Not truly in their hearts but in their eyes.”
3. Why did Friar Lawrence agree to marry Romeo and Juliet?
4. What word would you use to describe Friar Lawrence? Find a line that supports your opinion. Be sure to cite it properly.

Recap (Act 2, Scene 3):

* That Romeo sure is fast because the next thing we know, Romeo tracks down Friar Laurence, who has been out foraging for medicinal plants and herbs for one of his concoctions.
* Friar Laurence delivers a speech about how herbs and plants have the potential to be healing and medicinal, but if they're misused, they can be deadly poison.
* Friar Laurence looks at Romeo and notices that loverboy hasn't "been in bed tonight" and assumes that he must have finally hooked up with Rosaline. He also notices that Romeo is suddenly cheerful after weeks of moping around.
* Nope, he's totally over Rosaline and into this chick Juliet. Will Friar Laurence perform the ceremony?
* The Friar's response: "Holy Saint Francis!"
* Friar Laurence provides a much-needed reality check: Romeo has been switching girls like highway lanes.
* The Friar decides to help Romeo out but not because he's a romantic: he's got political motives—a marriage between Romeo and Juliet just might reconcile the two warring families.
* So, in the name of reducing the yearly street-brawl-murder rate in Verona, Friar Laurence skips the lecture on fidelity and commitment and goes right to agreeing with the marriage.

**Act 2, Scene 4**

* Mercutio and Benvolio still haven't figured out where Romeo is.
* It turns out that Tybalt has sent Romeo a message that goes something like this: "I'm going to beat you up with my sword."
* But lovelorn Romeo is in no condition to face Tybalt in a duel, right?
* History Snack: Many Elizabethans believed that love (between a man and a woman that is) basically turned men into sissies.
* Of course Mercutio also uses the opportunity to take a dig at Tybalt, who takes himself and his sword fighting skills way too seriously.
* Romeo finally shows up, and he's dropped the depressed "Rosaline doesn't love me" act.
* The fellas engage in one of their favorite pastimes, talking trash and telling some of the dirtiest jokes in Western literature. You know, just a few bros chillin' together.
* As planned, the Nurse shows up to meet with Romeo. She looks ridiculous, apparently, and Mercutio can't resist flirting with her, mocking her, and talking dirty to her. He first says that the fan she's using should be used to cover her face since it's more attractive than she is.
* In between all these antics, Romeo manages to take the Nurse aside and tell her that Juliet should find an excuse to come to Friar Laurence's church—where she will be married.
* [FYI: Romeo's keeping his wedding plans from everyone (except the Nurse and Juliet), including his best friends.]

Puns (Act 2, Scene 4)

Act 2, Scene 4 contains a pun “free-for-all” among Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio. The three engage in a furious war of wits, with many plays on words.

**Define pun**.

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**Find** a pun in this scene and identify its double meaning.

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| --- | --- |
| Pun | Meaning |

**Write** a sentence using a pun and identify its double meaning.

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| Pun | Meaning |



**Act 2, Scene 5**

* In an orchard at the Capulet place, Juliet waits for the Nurse to come back with a message from Romeo.
* When the Nurse comes back, she plays a little game by refusing to tell Juliet anything and complaining about her aching back.
* Finally, the Nurse gives in and tells Juliet to run to Friar Laurence's cell (a "cell" is just a room) where Romeo is waiting so they can get hitched.
* Before the scene ends, the Nurse says she'll "fetch a ladder" for Romeo to climb up so the lovers can spend their wedding night together.
1. Is the nurse right to be helping Juliet marry Romeo without informing Lord and Lady Capulet? How might this go wrong? How else might she and Juliet have handled the situation?



**Act 2, Scene 6**

1. What MOOD do you get from the following lines: “These sudden joys have sudden endings. They burn up in victory like fire and gunpowder. When they meet, as in a kiss, they explode” (Shakespeare 2.6.9-11).
2. What advice does the Friar give Romeo about love? Cite the lines.
3. How soon after meeting one another have Romeo and Juliet married?



Recap (Act 2, Scene 6):

* Back at Friar Laurence's place, the priest tries to convince Romeo to calm down a little. Marriage is for the long term, you see. "These violent delights have violent ends," he warns.
* Unfortunately, it goes in one ear and out the other.
* Juliet runs in. The room's hormonal level skyrockets. Romeo and Juliet can barely keep their hands off each other, even in the presence of a priest.
* Friar Laurence takes them off to marry them so they can move on to the highly anticipated honeymoon phase.

**Act 2 Review:** Draw a picture or symbol that represents something in each scene. Briefly explain the reasoning behind your drawing.

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| Act 2, Scene 1 | Act 2, Scene 2 | Act 2, Scene 3 |
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| Act 2, Scene 4 | Act 2, Scene 5 | Act 2, Scene 6 |
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