

ROMEO AND JULIET
READING COMPREHENSION
ACT 2
YEAR 5 AND 6

Lord Capulet stood on the steps of his mansion, waving farewell to the last of the guests. Behind him, servants cleared away the remains of the night's feasting. It had been a good party, he thought - everyone had left satisfied. He yawned and closed the door. One guest, though, was still there, hiding. An enemy. A Montague. Unobserved, he had climbed the garden wall, and concealed himself in the orchard. Romeo crouched beneath the trees waiting, trying to keep as quiet as possible, though the beat of his heart was deafening. He couldn't help it. Any love he'd felt till now was nothing - not even worthy of the word 'Love'. And the heart that seemingly beat in his chest now, he knew, was, in fact, with Juliet; he had given it to her. Juliet... just thinking her name made that heart beat even louder. Surely someone would hear it and find him? He started with surprise. Someone was indeed coming out onto the balcony above.

"But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?" he whispered.

As he realised who it was, that beating heart stopped for a split second. It was Juliet; and, just as - in Romeo's eyes - she had outshone the torches in the ballroom, now she seemed to him to sparkle even more brilliantly: brighter than the moon and stars that still hung in the sky above. He held his breath. His beloved was speaking. He leaned forward, desperate to catch her words.

Juliet was both happier and unhappier than she had ever been. She had never felt like this before - as if her heart were about to explode. And yet, at the same time, if only he were not a Montague....

"O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?" she sighed. "Deny thy father and refuse thy name!"

She was shocked to hear a reply come out of the darkness.

"Call me but Love and I'll be new baptised."

Romeo stepped forward into a pool of moonlight. They gazed at each other, lost in surprise. Then words poured out from each - passionate words piled one on top of another, building a mountain of love between them. There was no hesitation; they knew they were each other's destiny.

"Juliet!"

It was the Nurse, calling from within, impatient to see her young charge safely tucked up in bed and asleep. There were only moments of this night left to them; Juliet must go or rouse the Nurse's suspicion. Still, moments were long enough for her to ask a life-changing question.

“If that thy bent of love be honourable, thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow.”

Love at first sight is one thing. Marriage at first sight quite another - and between two such households, sworn enemies...who would carry out such a wedding? Surely no priest would do this. Yet Love will move mountains and, with Juliet’s words ringing in his ears, Romeo set off to find the one person who might listen.

The sun had not quite risen and the dew was still on the leaves as Friar Laurence stood, peering in the grey light, basket in hand. Herbs picked at this time made the most powerful of medicines, and here were planted the cures to many an ache and pain. He bent to pick the precious leaves, but straightened up again almost immediately at the sound of a familiar voice.

“Good morrow, father.”

He turned and look upon the speaker with affection. He had baptised the baby, taught the child and, in recent years had spent many a long hour listening to the troubles of the heartsick Romeo. Romeo was a close to a son as the friar, childless himself, would ever have. To one who knew the boy well it was clear that this had been another night spent sighing over love.

“Wast thou with Rosaline?”

“With Rosaline? My ghostly father, no. I have forgot that name, and that name’s woe.”

Well, if not Rosaline, then who? The answer came: Juliet Capulet. The Friar stared at Romeo. Surely this was the worst possible news? Madness to even think of such a marriage. But then, he saw a possibility: not the worst news.... perhaps even the best! A way out. An end to war between these two foes!

Now, with excitement in his voice, Friar Laurence announced to Romeo, “I’ll thy assistant be. For this alliance may so happy prove to turn your households rancour to pure love.”

Things can hardly have happened more quickly, yet, for Romeo and Juliet, time still hung heavy. Secret messages were sent. He waited to hear from her, she from him, and each second seemed an hour, each hour a year. At last, the answers came and the stage was now set. The clocks still ticked as slowly, but each tick brought the two lovers closer to their wedding. The afternoon arrived and Romeo and Juliet each slipped unnoticed into Friar Laurence’s lodgings. They knelt before him, and were married.

When your heart is full of love, there’s no room for hate. Does that mean, though, that when your heart is full of hate, there’s no room for love? Who would know the answer to that question? Better ask Tybalt...

Part 1: Page 1

1. Who stood on the steps of his mansion?

2. What is a mansion?

A large, impressive house	<input type="checkbox"/>	A small flat	<input type="checkbox"/>
A swimming pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	A cottage	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Who was still hiding in the orchard

4. *'Unobserved, he had climbed the garden wall, and concealed himself in the orchard'.*

Using evidence from the text what tells us that Romeo was desperate to see Juliet again.

5. *'Romeo crouched beneath the trees waiting, trying to keep as quiet as possible'.*

Underline the TWO words that show Romeo is hiding

6. What does Romeo think Juliet shines *'brighter than'*?

7. “But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?” he whispered.
Why does Romeo whisper this?

8. *‘Juliet was both happier and unhappier than she had ever been. She had never felt like this before – as if her heart were about to explode. And yet, at the same time, if only he were not a Montague....’*

Why is Juliet both ‘happier and unhappier than she’d ever been before’?

9. *“O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?” she sighed. “**Deny** thy father and **refuse** thy name!”*

What is Juliet asking Romeo to do?

Tell your dad that you love me

Forget about your dad and change your name

To leave her alone and go away

Part 2: Page 2

10. Who did Romeo go and ask for help in marrying Juliet?

11. Read the paragraph beginning....

'The sun had not quite risen and the dew was still on the leaves...'

Why was Friar Laurence picking herbs so early in the morning?

12. Read the paragraph beginning...

'He turned and look upon the speaker with affection...'

Why is Friar Laurence so fond of Romeo?

Justify your answer with evidence from the text

13. Why does Friar Laurence change his mind and think the news that Romeo is in love with Juliet as perhaps the best news?

It will be fun to have a party

It will end the war between the two families

It will make Friar Laurence famous

It is always nice to hear that people are in love

14. What significant event happened at the end of this act? Use a direct quote from the text to support your answer
