

ROMEO AND JULIET
READING COMPREHENSION
ACT 4
YEAR 3 AND 4

Do you remember Lord Capulet’s party? And the girl who danced so joyfully there, whose smile lit up the room? Where did that Juliet go? The one we see now in Friar Laurence’s cell is very different. Tears stream down her cheeks as she pleads with the priest to help her to escape her marriage to Paris. “Be not so long to speak; I long to die, if what thou speak’st speak not of remedy. “

Remedy? What remedy, what cure, could there be for this situation, thought the Friar? It wasn’t like the illnesses he cured with his herbs – this was desperate! But wait, there was something in that thought. Perhaps it was EXACTLY his herbs that were the solution. “Hold, daughter: I do spy a kind of hope.”

1. Where is Juliet at the beginning of this act?

Her bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lord Capulet’s party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friar Laurence’s cell	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paris’ house	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. “Tears stream down her cheeks as she pleads with the priest to help her to escape her marriage to Paris”.

A. Underline the two words that show Juliet is crying

B. What does ‘plead’ mean. Tick one box

to shout	<input type="checkbox"/>	to beg	<input type="checkbox"/>	to cry	<input type="checkbox"/>	to pretend	<input type="checkbox"/>
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3. “I long to die, if what thou speak’st speak not of remedy. “

What is Juliet saying here?

I am tired and want you to stop talking	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want Paris to die	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to die unless you can help me	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have hurt myself and need some medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What did Friar Laurence suddenly think could help Juliet?

Praying	<input type="checkbox"/>	His herbs	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Juliet was prepared to do anything rather than marry Paris – why, she’d rather jump from the top of a tower than be wed to him.

Well, said the Friar, if Juliet was prepared to take her own life, then he had the answer: a special potion of his own making that could bring about a sleep so deep it looked like death. “Go home,” he said, “be merry, give consent to marry Paris.” He held up his hand to silence the protest that he knew would come. There was more, she must listen. He took out a small glass bottle and spoke again, urgently. “Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone, and this distilling liquor drink thou off.”

Once she had done that, the potion would quickly take effect, making it appear to all that Juliet was dead. Once her family believed her to be dead, they would take her straight away to the Capulet family tomb. Meanwhile, he would send letters to Romeo in Mantua, telling him of the plan. Romeo and he would then hurry to the tomb to be there when Juliet awoke, ready for the now happily reunited couple to escape back to Mantua.

5. What would Juliet rather do than marry Paris?

6. What would Friar Laurence’s special potion do?

Make Juliet so sick she wouldn’t be able to marry Paris

Make Juliet forget she had ever met Romeo

Make Juliet fall in love with Paris

Make Juliet sleep so deeply it would seem as if she was dead

7. Put these in order of how Friar Laurence was hoping things would happen

Friar Laurence would write a letter to Romeo telling him of the plan

Juliet would drink the sleeping potion

Juliet would go home and tell her parents she would marry Paris

Juliet’s parents would think she had died

Juliet, it turned out, was an excellent actor. Hidden away in her pocket she had the potion, hidden away in her heart she had this desperate plan. But who would have thought it as she walked back into her father’s house? No, her heart seemed light; the tears that had lately been coursing down her cheeks were all dried. She smiled again and – Lord and Lady Capulet could hardly believe it – had returned to ask forgiveness and to declare that yes, she would marry Paris.

So overjoyed at this news was her father that he declared that there should be no more waiting – not even till Thursday. No, the wedding would take place tomorrow!

Juliet forced her smile to be even brighter at this news but inside, her fear grew of what was to come. That evening, with her mother and the Nurse departed for the night, she sat alone on her bed, the small bottle in her hand. Suddenly she was seized with doubt. “What if this mixture do not work at all? Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?” She shuddered at the thought, and slowly uncorked the bottle. “Romeo, I drink to thee!”

8. Tick two boxes that show how Juliet made her parents believe she wanted to marry Paris after all

She smiled

She sang a love song

She danced into the house

She had stopped crying

9. When did Lord Capulet change the wedding to?

10. Why do you think Juliet ‘forced her smile to be even brighter’ when her father said the wedding would take place the next day?

11. *‘That evening, with her mother and the Nurse departed for the night, she sat alone on her bed, the small bottle in her hand. Suddenly she was seized with doubt. “What if this mixture do not work at all? Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?” She shuddered at the thought, and slowly uncorked the bottle. “Romeo, I drink to thee!”*

Why do you think Juliet was ‘suddenly seized with doubt’?
