

ROMEO AND JULIET

READING COMPREHENSION

ACT 5

YEAR 3 AND 4

As Juliet's coffin was carried through the streets of Verona, the crowds stood in stunned silence. All believed her to be dead, and in that sense, the plan was working brilliantly. All deaths are sad, thought those who watched, but the passing of one so young? That was a tragedy.

You and I know that that is not true. That was no tragedy: Juliet was not dead. But what is just about to happen? It hardly bears thinking about. For, amongst the weeping crowd was Romeo's manservant and close friend, Balthasar, who, as soon as the funeral procession had passed, leapt onto his horse and rode straight to Mantua to pass on this dreadful news, not knowing, of course, that Juliet was still alive.

Romeo's legs gave way beneath him on hearing what Balthasar had to say. "Is it e'en so?" he groaned, his voice barely more than a whisper.

1. What did the people watching think was so sad about Juliet's death?

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| She was a Capulet | <input type="checkbox"/> | She was so beautiful | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| She was so young | <input type="checkbox"/> | She was so kind | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Was Juliet really dead? Tick one box

- YES NO

3. What was the name of Romeo's servant who watched the funeral procession?

- | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Benvolio | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mercutio | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Paris | <input type="checkbox"/> | Balthasar | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Complete the sentence

When Romeo's servant saw the funeral procession he

5. Tick the synonym for 'groaned' (A synonym is a word that has a similar meaning)

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| shouted | <input type="checkbox"/> | moaned | <input type="checkbox"/> | sang | <input type="checkbox"/> | danced | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|

Balthasar tried to find some words of comfort, but there were none to be had. Romeo, however, had decided already upon a course of action – to gaze upon his love one last time. He quickly gave his orders. “Thou know’st my lodging. Get me ink and paper and hire post-horses; I will hence tonight.”

After Balthasar had left, Romeo’s mind was full of images: Juliet at the Capulet party, burning brighter than the torches, Juliet on the balcony shining like the sun, and he himself illuminated in her radiance. Now that light had been snuffed out and there was nothing but darkness left. Let it be so, Romeo decided; once he had seen her face one more time he would hide himself in that darkness forever, joining his love in death.

In order to make that death sure, he stopped on his journey to Verona to buy poison from an Apothecary.

At first, the Apothecary didn’t want to sell the young man such deadly goods, but Romeo’s coins were too tempting for such a poor man. Reluctantly, he handed over the poison. “My poverty but not my will consents. Put this in any liquid thing and drink it off, and if you had the strength of twenty men it would dispatch you straight.”

6. What did Romeo decide to do when he heard the news of Juliet’s death? Tick one box

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Phone Friar Laurence | <input type="checkbox"/> | Go back to Verona | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Go for a walk | <input type="checkbox"/> | Phone his mum | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. A. Where did Romeo stop at on his way to Verona?

B. What did Romeo buy there?

8. Why does the Apothecary give the poison to Romeo?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| He wants to see if it works | <input type="checkbox"/> | He needs the money | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| He wants Romeo to die | <input type="checkbox"/> | He doesn’t like Romeo | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. What will happen if Romeo drinks the poison?

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| He will get sick | <input type="checkbox"/> | He will die | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|

He will be poor

He will fall in love

At that very moment, indeed, as Romeo set off for the Capulet tomb, carrying the poison with him, Friar Laurence's messenger had just arrived back at the priest's dwelling, bearing news. Friar Laurence was eager to hear what he had to say. "Friar John! What says Romeo?"

But Friar John had a terrible tale to tell. A plague had broken out, and the Friar had been forbidden to leave the city. The message was still in his hand! This news could not be worse. Friar Laurence needed to act immediately.

"Friar John, go hence – I must to the monument alone. Within this hour will fair Juliet wake." And with that, Friar Laurence set off, running as fast as he could towards the Capulet tomb, desperately hoping that he could arrive in time to tell Romeo the truth.

Holding that image of his dearest love in his mind's eye, he raised the poison to his lips and drained the bottle. Scarcely had he swallowed the last drop before the fatal drug took effect. Romeo was dead.

Seconds later, panting for breath, Friar Laurence arrived. "Romeo! O, pale! Ah, what an unkind hour is guilty of this lamentable chance!"

Perhaps not all was lost – Juliet was stirring, the potion wearing off. Could he prevent another death? He begged her to leave, but the sound of the guards outside frightened the priest away.

10. Who arrived at Juliet's tomb first?

Friar Laurence

Romeo

11. A. What frightened Friar Laurence away? Tick one box

Some birds

A cat

The guards

Romeo

B. Do you think Friar Laurence should have run away when he heard the guards?

YES

NO

Explain your answer

Juliet was alone with the body of her husband. “What's this?” she gasped. “A cup closed in my true love's hand?” Eager to join him in death she raised the bottle to her lips, only to be disappointed.

“O churl. Drunk all and left no friendly drop to help me after?”

Outside, the Captain of the Watch and his guards were breaking their way into the tomb – time was running out for Juliet. With no poison left to help her on her way, she seized Romeo’s dagger and plunged it deep into her own heart.

The Montagues and Capulets arrived to gaze upon their children, so young and now gone. The Prince, summoned by the guards, saw the bodies; he saw the tears; he felt the sorrow. But he saw something else too: an opportunity. From this great loss, could, perhaps, come healing – and peace for his city.

He turned to face the parents of this tragic couple. “Capulet, Montague,” he began “There must be no more deaths, only forgiveness”. And, at last, the Montagues and Capulets agreed. More than that, between them, they pledged to raise statues of pure gold to the memory of their children and the love that, in their brief lives, they had shared.

12. How did Juliet die in the end?

13. ‘The Prince saw an opportunity....’

What did the Prince think could happen now?

14. Complete the sentence, using words from the text

He turned to face the parents of this tragic couple.

“Capulet, Montague,” he began “There must be no more

_____, only _____”.

15. Why did the Capulets and Montagues put up gold statues of Romeo and Juliet?
