

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Prereading Activity
for
Romeo and Juliet
Plot Summaries
Prologue and Act II

Directions: To help you better understand and follow Shakespeare's play, read the summary of specific scenes immediately before you begin to read the original. If you get lost during the scene, refer to the summary again.

Prologue The Chorus both comments upon Romeo and Juliet having fallen in love with their sworn enemies (lines 1-5) and speculates upon the outcome of their love (lines 6-15). Both Romeo and Juliet, as young people who have often desired love, have unknowingly found it in their sworn enemies. They find it is not quite as charming as they thought it would be. Filled with passion, however, they are willing to meet secretly.

Act II, scene i Late Saturday night or early Sunday morning, Romeo sneaks down the road outside Capulet's orchard. Questioning whether he can go back now, he climbs the wall. Benvolio, Mercutio, and others come down the lane looking for Romeo, calling his name. Mercutio pretends that Romeo is dead of love for Rosaline and tries to raise Romeo's ghost again by calling upon the magic of Rosaline's spirit.

Act II, scene ii Romeo remains in the shadows as he sees Juliet on her balcony. Struck by her beauty, he compares Juliet to the sun, outshining the moon. When she leans her head on her hand, Romeo wishes to be a glove on it, in order to touch her cheek.

Juliet continues speaking aloud, unaware of Romeo. She wishes Romeo weren't a Montague, but concludes that his name, not his person, is the enemy. When Romeo speaks, startling Juliet, he tells her that he would change his name for her happiness.

Juliet is afraid for Romeo's safety; if he's caught, the Capulets will kill him. Caught up in love, Romeo fears nothing. They swear their love to each other. Juliet tells Romeo if he is honorable, then he will marry her. She agrees to send a messenger the next day to find out the details. After many delays, they part.

Romeo and Juliet: Act II Plot Summaries (continued)

*Act II,
scene iii*

Shortly after dawn on Sunday, Friar Laurence gathers herbs and wildflowers to make medicines. When Romeo appears, the friar notices that Romeo has been out all night. The friar asks if he's been with Rosaline. Romeo tells the priest that he is now in love with Juliet. Friar Laurence scolds Romeo for falling in and out of love too quickly. Although Romeo tries to convince the monk that he is truly in love, Friar Laurence advises him to proceed slowly with love.

*Act II,
scene iv*

While Romeo has been conferring with the friar, Benvolio and Mercutio continue to search the streets for Romeo. Tybalt, Lady Capulet's nephew, has sent a letter challenging Romeo to a duel for crashing the party. Mercutio and Benvolio point out Tybalt's skill as a swordsman.

When Romeo appears, Mercutio accuses him of having spent the night with a French prostitute and is irritated that Romeo gave them the slip. Mercutio teases Romeo, who takes it in good humor.

The Nurse, who, acting as Juliet's messenger has dressed in her best clothes and tries to act like a lady, comes to meet Romeo in the square. Mercutio and Benvolio, thinking she is a prostitute, taunt her when she asks for Romeo. Romeo finally sends his friends home and speaks to the Nurse. Romeo tells the Nurse that Juliet should come to Friar Laurence's cell, where they will be married that afternoon. Romeo also tells the Nurse to meet Balthasar, his servant, to get a rope ladder, so Romeo can sneak into the house later that night.

*Act II,
scene v*

Juliet paces the orchard waiting for the Nurse to return. The nurse was to have been back at 9:30, but it is now shortly after noon. When the Nurse does return, she is tired and wishes to rest before delivering Romeo's message. Only when the Nurse is certain that she and Juliet are alone does she deliver the message. The Nurse hurries Juliet to the meeting while she goes to collect the ladder.

*Act II,
Scene vi*

Friar Laurence warns Romeo that the young man may be caught up in his passion and warns him to proceed cautiously. When Romeo and Juliet meet, Friar Laurence is convinced that they are truly in love. Hoping to end the feud, Friar Laurence agrees to marry them.