

# Act V

## Scene i. Mantua. A street.

[Enter ROMEO.]

ROMEO. If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,<sup>1</sup>  
 My dreams presage<sup>2</sup> some joyful news at hand.  
 My bosom's lord<sup>3</sup> sits lightly in his throne,  
 And all this day an unaccustomed spirit  
 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.  
 I dreamt my lady came and found me dead  
 (Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think!)  
 And breathed such life with kisses in my lips  
 That I revived and was an emperor.  
 Ah me! How sweet is love itself possessed,  
 When but love's shadows<sup>4</sup> are so rich in joy!

- 1. **flattering ... sleep:** Pleasing illusions of dreams.
- 2. **presage:** Foretell.
- 3. **bosom's lord:** Heart.

Romco dreams that Juliet finds him dead + breathes life back into him.

(Foreshadowing)

- 4. **shadows:** Dreams; unreal images.

Romco's servant goes to Mantua w/ News...

[Enter ROMEO'S MAN, BALTHASAR, booted.]

News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?  
 Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?  
 How doth my lady? Is my father well?  
 How fares my Juliet? That I ask again,  
 For nothing can be ill if she be well.

If Juliet is well, then all is good in the world

MAN. Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.  
 Her body sleeps in Capels' monument,<sup>5</sup>  
 And her immortal part with angels lives.  
 I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault  
 And presently took post<sup>6</sup> to tell it you.  
 O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,  
 Since you did leave it for my office,<sup>7</sup> sir.

Juliet is well now that she's in heaven

- 5. **Capels' monument:** The Capulets' burial vault.

- 6. **presently took post:** Immediately set out on horseback.

- 7. **office:** Duty.

Fate has separated him from Juliet once again

ROMEO. Is it e'en so? Then I defy you, stars!  
 Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and paper  
 And hire post horses. I will hence tonight.

MAN. I do beseech you, sir, have patience.  
 Your looks are pale and wild and do import  
 Some misadventure.<sup>8</sup>

- 8. **import/Some misadventure:** Suggest some misfortune.

ROMEO. Tush, thou art deceived.  
 Leave me and do the thing I bid thee do.  
 Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

MAN. No, my good lord.

ROMEO. No matter. Get thee gone.  
 And hire those horses. I'll be with thee straight.

[Exit BALTHASAR.]

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.  
 35 Let's see for means. O mischief, thou art swift  
 To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!  
 I do remember an apothecary,<sup>9</sup>  
 And hereabouts 'a dwells, which late I noted  
 In tatt'ed weeds, with overwhelming brows,  
 40 Culling of simples.<sup>10</sup> Meager were his looks,  
 Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;  
 And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
 An alligator stuffed, and other skins  
 Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves  
 45 A beggarly account<sup>11</sup> of empty boxes,  
 Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,  
 Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses<sup>12</sup>  
 Were thinly scatterèd, to make up a show.  
 Noting this penury, to myself I said,  
 50 "And if a man did need a poison now  
 Whose sale is present death in Mantua,  
 Here lives 'a caitiff<sup>13</sup> wretch would sell it him."  
 O, this same thought did but forerun my need,  
 And this same needy man must sell it me.  
 55 As I remember, this should be the house.  
 Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.  
 What, ho! Apothecary!

**9. apothecary:** One who prepares and sells drugs and medicines.

**10. In tatt'ed . . . simples:** In torn clothing, with overhanging eyebrows, sorting out herbs.

**11. beggarly account:** Small number.

**12. cakes of roses:** Pressed rose petals (used for perfume).

*Romeo knows of an apothecary that will sell him poison*

**13. caitiff:** Miserable.

[Enter APOTHECARY.]

**APOTHECARY.**

Who calls so loud?

**ROMEO.** Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.  
 Hold, there is forty ducats.<sup>14</sup> Let me have  
 60 A dram of poison, such soon-speeding gear<sup>15</sup>  
 As will disperse itself through all the veins  
 That the life-weary taker may fall dead,  
 And that the trunk<sup>16</sup> may be discharged of breath  
 As violently as hasty powder fired  
 65 Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

*Romeo offers 40 gold coins for lethal poison*

**14. ducats:** Gold coins.

**15. soon-speeding gear:** Fast-working stuff.

**16. trunk:** Body.

**APOTHECARY.** Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law  
 Is death to any he that utters<sup>17</sup> them.

*Refuses b/c selling poison carries a death sentence.*

**17. utters:** Sells.

**ROMEO.** Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness  
 And fearest to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,  
 70 Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,  
 Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back:  
 The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law;  
 The world affords no law to make thee rich;  
 Then be not poor, but break it and take this.

*He's poor + in no position to refuse the \$*

75 **APOTHECARY.** My poverty but not my will consents.

He doesn't want to, but he will.

**ROMEO:** I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

**APOTHECARY:** Put this in any liquid thing you will  
And drink it off, and if you had the strength  
Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

80 **ROMEO.** There is thy gold—worse poison to men's souls,  
Doing more murder in this loathsome world,  
Than these poor compounds<sup>18</sup> that thou mayst not sell.  
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.  
Farewell. Buy food and get thyself in flesh.

Romeo will go to Juliet's tomb + Kill himself

18. **compounds:** Mixtures.

85 Come, cordial<sup>19</sup> and not poison, go with me  
To Juliet's grave; for there must I use thee. [Exit.]

19. **cordial:** Health-giving drink.

**Scene ii.** FRIAR LAWRENCE'S cell.

[Enter FRIAR JOHN to FRIAR LAWRENCE.]

**JOHN.** Holy Franciscan friar, brother, ho!

Friar John was supposed to get word to Romeo in Mantua about Juliet's plan.

[Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE.]

**LAWRENCE.** This same should be the voice of Friar John.  
Welcome from Mantua. What says Romeo?  
Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

**JOHN.** Going to find a barefoot brother out,  
One of our order, to associate<sup>1</sup> me  
Here in this city visiting the sick,  
And finding him, the searchers<sup>2</sup> of the town,  
Suspecting that we both were in a house  
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,  
Sealed up the doors, and would not let us forth,  
So that my speed to Mantua there was stayed.

1. **associate:** Accompany.

2. **searchers:** Health officers who search for victims of the plague.

Friar John explains that he couldn't deliver the letter because he was quarantined

**LAWRENCE.** Who bare my letter, then, to Romeo?

**JOHN:** I could not send it—here it is again—  
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,  
So fearful were they of infection.

The letter never got to Romeo

**LAWRENCE.** Unhappy fortune! By my brotherhood,  
The letter was not nice,<sup>3</sup> but full of charge,  
Of dear import;<sup>4</sup> and the neglecting it  
May do much danger; Friar John, go hence,  
Get me an iron crow and bring it straight  
Unto my cell.

It was important!! Now

3. **nice:** Trivial.

4. **full of charge, Of dear import:** Urgent and important.

→ there will be trouble

↳ get a crow bar

**JOHN.** Brother, I'll go and bring it thee. [Exit.]

**LAWRENCE.** Now must I to the monument alone.

Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake.

She will beshrew<sup>5</sup> me much that Romeo

25 Hath had no notice of these accidents;<sup>6</sup>

But I will write again to Mantua,

And keep her at my cell till Romeo come—

Poor living corse, closed in a dead man's tomb! [Exit.]

Romeo will not be  
there to save her, so the  
Friar goes to get her

5. **beshrew:** Blame.

6. **accidents:** Happenings.

**Scene iii.** A churchyard; in it a monument belonging to  
the CAPULETS.

[Enter PARIS and his PAGE with flowers and sweet water.]

**PARIS.** Give me thy torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof.<sup>1</sup>

Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.

Under yond yew trees lay thee all along,<sup>2</sup>

Holding thy ear close to the hollow ground.

5 So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread

(Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves)

But thou shalt hear it. Whistle then to me,

As signal that thou hearest something approach.

Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

1. **aloof:** Apart.

2. **lay . . . along:** Lie down  
flat.

Paris visits grave  
with flowers + orders  
servant to keep  
watch.

10 **PAGE.** [Aside] I am almost afraid to stand alone

Here in the churchyard; yet I will adventure.<sup>3</sup> [Retires.]

3. **adventure:** Chance it.

**PARIS.** Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew

(O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones)

Which with sweet<sup>4</sup> water nightly I will dew;

15 Or, wanting that, with tears distilled by moans.

The obsequies<sup>5</sup> that I for thee will keep

Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

[Whistle BOY.]

The boy gives warning something doth approach.

What cursed foot wanders this way tonight

20 To cross<sup>6</sup> my obsequies and true love's rite?

What, with a torch? Muffle me, night, awhile. [Retires.]

4. **sweet:** Perfumed.

5. **obsequies:** Memorial  
ceremonies.

Servant warns of  
someone  
approaching

6. **cross:** Interrupt.

Paris hides

[Enter ROMEO, and BALTHASAR with a torch, a mattock, and  
a crow of iron.]

Romeo + servant

enter with crow bar

**ROMEO.** Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.

Hold, take this letter. Early in the morning

See thou deliver it to my lord and father.

25 Give me the light. Upon thy life I charge thee,

Whate'er thou hearest or seest, stand all aloof

And do not interrupt me in my course.

Why I descend into this bed of death

Romeo gives  
his servant a  
letter for  
Montague

Is partly to behold my lady's face,  
But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger  
A precious ring—a ring that I must use  
In dear employment.<sup>7</sup> Therefore hence, be gone.  
But if thou, jealous,<sup>8</sup> dost return to pry  
In what I farther shall intend to do,  
By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint  
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs.  
The time and my intents are savage-wild,  
More fierce and more inexorable<sup>9</sup> far  
Than empty<sup>10</sup> tigers or the roaring sea.

**BALTHASAR.** I will be gone, sir, and not trouble ye.

**ROMEO.** So shalt thou show me friendship. Take thou  
that.

Live, and be prosperous; and farewell, good fellow.

**BALTHASAR.** [*Aside*] For all this same, I'll hide me  
hereabout.

His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt. [*Retires.*]

**ROMEO.** Thou detestable maw,<sup>11</sup> thou womb of death,  
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And in despite<sup>12</sup> I'll cram thee with more food.

[*ROMEO opens the tomb.*]

He tells servant he  
has to retrieve a  
ring he gave Juliet

**7. dear employment:**  
Important business.

**8. jealous:** Curious.

Do not come in after  
me or else...

**9. inexorable:** Uncon-  
trollable.

**10. empty:** Hungry.

Doesn't trust Romeo's  
intentions, so he lingers

**11. maw:** Stomach.

**12. despite:** Scorn.



**PARIS.** This is that banished haughty Montague  
50 That murd'rd my love's cousin—with which grief  
It is supposed the fair creature died—  
And here is come to do some villainous shame  
To the dead bodies. I will apprehend<sup>13</sup> him.  
Stop thy unhallowed toll, vile Montague!  
55 Can vengeance be pursued further than death?  
Condemnèd villain, I do apprehend thee.  
Obey, and go with me; for thou must die.

Paris recognizes  
Romeo +  
thinks Romeo has  
come to dishonor graves  
13. apprehend: Seize, of  
arrest.  
Juliet +/or  
Tybalt

**ROMEO.** I must indeed; and therefore came I hither.  
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desp'rate man.  
60 Fly hence and leave me. Think upon these gone;  
Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,  
Put not another sin upon my head → Don't make me sin again  
By urging me to fury. O, be gone! by killing you  
By heaven, I love thee better than myself,  
65 For I come hither armed against myself.  
Stay not, be gone. Live, and hereafter say  
A madman's mercy bid thee run away.

**PARIS.** I do defy thy conjurations.<sup>14</sup>  
And apprehend thee for a felon<sup>15</sup> here.

14. conjurations: Solemn  
appeals.  
15. felon: Criminal.

70 **ROMEO.** Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!  
[They fight.]

**PAGE.** O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.  
[Exit, PARIS falls.]

Paris' page/servant  
sees + goes for  
help.

**PARIS.** O, I am slain! If thou be merciful,  
Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.

[Dies.] Paris Dies

**ROMEO.** In faith, I will. Let me peruse<sup>16</sup> this face.  
75 Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!  
What said my man when my betossèd<sup>17</sup> soul  
Did not attend<sup>18</sup> him as we rode? I think  
He told me Paris should have married Juliet.  
Said he not so, or did I dream it so?  
80 Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,  
To think it was so? O, give me thy hand,  
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!  
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave.  
A grave? O, no, a lanthorn,<sup>19</sup> slaught'rd youth,  
85 For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes  
This vault a feasting presence<sup>20</sup> full of light.  
Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interred.

16. peruse: Look over.

17. betossèd: Upset.

18. attend: Give attention  
to.

19. lanthorn: Windowed  
structure on top of a room  
to admit light; also, a lan-  
tern.

20. feasting presence:  
Chamber fit for a celebra-  
tion.

[Lays him in the tomb.]  
↳ Drags Paris into tomb



How oft when men are at the point of death  
Have they been merry! Which their keepers<sup>21</sup> call  
A lightning before death. O, how may I  
Call this a lightning? O my love, my wife!  
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.  
Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign<sup>22</sup> yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.  
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?  
O, what more favor can I do to thee  
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain  
To sunder<sup>23</sup> his that was thine enemy?  
Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,

**21. keepers:** Jailers.

**22. ensign:** Banner.

**23. sunder:** Cut off.

She looks too beautiful to be dead

Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe  
That unsubstantial Death is amorous,<sup>24</sup>  
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
105 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
For fear of that I still will stay with thee  
And never from this pallet<sup>25</sup> of dim night  
Depart again. Here, here will I remain  
With worms that are thy chambermaids. O, here  
110 Will I set up my everlasting rest  
And shake the yoke of inauspicious<sup>26</sup> stars  
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!  
Arms, take your last embrace! And, lips, O you  
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
115 A dateless<sup>27</sup> bargain to engrossing<sup>28</sup> death!  
Come, bitter conduct;<sup>29</sup> come, unsavory guide!  
Thou desperate pilot,<sup>30</sup> now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!  
Here's to my love! [Drinks.] O true apothecary!  
120 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. (Falls.)

24. amorous: Full of love.

25. pallet: Bed.

26. inauspicious: Promising misfortune.

27. dateless: Eternal.

28. engrossing: All-encompassing.

29. conduct: Guide (poison).

30. pilot: Captain (Romeo himself).

Drinks poison + dies

[Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE, with lanthorn, crow, and spade.]

FRIAR. Saint Francis be my speed!<sup>31</sup> How oft tonight  
Have my old feet stumbled<sup>32</sup> at graves! Who's there?

31. speed: Help.

32. stumbled: Stumbling was thought to be a bad omen.

BALTHASAR. Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

FRIAR. Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,  
125 What torch is yond that vainly lends his light  
To grubs<sup>33</sup> and eyeless skulls? As I discern,  
It burneth in the Capels' monument.

33. grubs: Worms.

BALTHASAR. It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,  
One that you love.

FRIAR. Who is it?

BALTHASAR. Romeo.

FRIAR. How long hath he been there?

130 BALTHASAR. Full half an hour.

FRIAR. Go with me to the vault.

BALTHASAR. I dare not, sir.  
My master knows not but I am gone hence,  
And fearfully did menace me with death  
If I did stay to look on his intents.

Balthasar doesn't want to go in b/c Romeo warned him not to.



**FRIAR.** Stay then; I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me.

O much I fear some ill unthrifty<sup>34</sup> thing.  
*↳ Unlucky*

**34. unthrifty:** Unlucky.

**BALTHASAR.** As I did sleep under this yew tree here,  
I dreamt my master and another fought,  
And that my master slew him.

*Balthasar dreamt that  
Romeo killed someone  
(he did → Paris)*

**FRIAR.** *Romeo!*  
Alack, alack, what blood is this which stains  
The stony entrance of this sepulcher?  
What mean these masterless<sup>35</sup> and gory swords  
To lie discolored by this place of peace?

*Finds Bloody swords  
abandoned outside  
tomb.*  
**35. masterless:** Dis-  
carded (without masters).

*[Enters the tomb.]*

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? What, Paris too?  
And steeped in blood? Ah, what an unkind<sup>36</sup> hour  
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!  
The lady stirs.

*Sees Paris + Romeo's bodies*  
**36. unkind:** Unnatural.

*[JULIET rises.] → Juliet wakes up.*

**JULIET.** O comfortable<sup>37</sup> friar! Where is my lord?  
I do remember well where I should be,  
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

**37. comfortable:** Com-  
forting.

**FRIAR.** I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest  
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep.  
A greater power than we can contradict  
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.  
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;  
And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee  
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.  
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming.  
Come, go, good Juliet. I dare no longer stay.

*Friar tries to  
rush her away*

**JULIET.** Go, get thee hence, for I will not away. *[Exit FRIAR.]*  
What's here? A cup, closed in my true love's hand?  
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless<sup>38</sup> end.  
O churl!<sup>39</sup> Drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips.  
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them  
To make me die with a restorative.<sup>40</sup> *[Kisses him.]*  
Thy lips are warm!

*→ He drank all the  
poison, leaving none  
for her.*

**38. timeless:** Untimely;  
too soon.  
**39. churl:** Rude fellow.

*Hops  
Enough poison is still on his lips*  
**40. restorative:** Medicine.

**CHIEF WATCHMAN.** *[Within.]* Lead, boy. Which way?  
**JULIET.** Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy<sup>41</sup> dagger!  
*[Snatches ROMEO's dagger.]*  
This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.  
*[She stabs herself and falls.]*

**41. happy:** Convenient;  
opportune.

*Juliet stabs  
herself*



[Enter PARIS' BOY and WATCH.]

170 **BOY.** This is the place. There, where the torch doth burn.

**CHIEF-WATCHMAN.** The ground is bloody. Search about the churchyard.

Go, some of you; whoe'er you find attach.<sup>42</sup>

[Exit some of the WATCH.]

Pitiful sight! Here lies the County slain;  
And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,

175 Who here hath lain this two days buried.

Go, tell the Prince; run to the Capulets;  
Raise up the Montagues; some others search.

[Exit others of the WATCH.]

We see  
but th  
We can  
some  
COND  
the cl  
NIEF W.  
hither  
PRIAR  
MIRD V  
we  
We to  
As h  
CHIEF V  
er the  
PRINCE  
Tha  
ier CAP  
CAPUL  
LADY  
Sor  
Wit  
PRINC  
CHIEF  
s  
An  
W:  
PRIN  
CHIE  
W  
T  
CAP  
T  
I:  
205 /

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie,  
But the true ground<sup>43</sup> of all these piteous woes  
We cannot without circumstance descry.<sup>44</sup>

*Enter some of the WATCH, with ROMEO'S MAN, BALTHASAR.]*

**SECOND WATCHMAN.** Here's Romeo's man. We found him in  
the churchyard.

**CHIEF WATCHMAN.** Hold him in safety till the Prince come  
hither.

*Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE and another WATCHMAN.]*

**THIRD WATCHMAN.** Here is a friar that trembles, sighs, and  
weeps.

We took this mattock and this spade from him  
As he was coming from this churchyard's side.

**CHIEF WATCHMAN.** A great suspicion! Stay the friar too.

*Enter the PRINCE and Attendants.]*

**PRINCE.** What misadventure is so early up,  
That calls our person from our morning rest?

*Enter CAPULET and his WIFE with others.]*

**CAPULET.** What should it be, that is so shrieked abroad?

**LADY CAPULET.** O, the people in the street cry "Romeo,"  
Some "Juliet," and some "Paris"; and all run  
With open outcry toward our monument.

**PRINCE.** What fear is this which startles in your ears?

**CHIEF WATCHMAN.** Sovereign, here lies the County Paris  
slain;  
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,  
Warm and new killed.

**PRINCE.** Search, seek, and know how this foul murder  
comes.

**CHIEF WATCHMAN.** Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's  
man,  
With instruments upon them fit to open  
These dead men's tombs.

**CAPULET.** O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter  
bleeds!

This dagger hath mista'en; for, lo, his house<sup>45</sup>  
Is empty on the back of Montague,

And it missheathèd in my daughter's bosom!

**43. ground:** Cause.

**44. without circum-  
stance descry:** See clearly  
without details.

*Friar gets caught.*

*all 3 are  
newly dead.*

**45. house:** Sheath.

LADY CAPULET. O me, this sight of death is as a bell  
That warns my old age to a sepulcher.

[Enter MONTAGUE and others.]

PRINCE. Come, Montague; for thou art early up  
To see thy son and heir more early down.

210 MONTAGUE. Alas, my liege,<sup>46</sup> my wife is dead tonight!  
Grief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath.  
What further woe conspires against mine age?

PRINCE. Look, and thou shalt see.

MONTAGUE. O thou untaught! What manners is in this,  
215 To press before thy father to a grave?

PRINCE. Seal up the mouth of outrage<sup>47</sup> for a while,  
Till we can clear these ambiguities  
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;  
And then will I be general of your woes<sup>48</sup>  
220 And lead you even to death. Meantime forbear,  
And let mischance be slave to patience.<sup>49</sup>  
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

FRIAR. I am the greatest, able to do least,  
Yet most suspected, as the time and place  
225 Doth make against me, of this direful<sup>50</sup> murder;  
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge<sup>51</sup>  
Myself condemnèd and myself excused.

PRINCE. Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

FRIAR. I will be brief, for my short date of breath<sup>52</sup>  
230 Is not so long as is a tedious tale.  
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;  
And she, there dead, that's Romeo's faithful wife.  
I married them; and their stol'n marriage day  
Was Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death  
235 Banished the new-made bridegroom from this city;  
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.  
You, to remove that siege of grief from her,  
Betrothed and would have married her perforce  
To County Paris. Then comes she to me  
240 And with wild looks bid me devise some mean  
To rid her from this second marriage,  
Or in my cell there would she kill herself.  
Then gave I her (so tutored by my art)  
A sleeping potion; which so took effect  
245 As I intended, for it wrought on her

386 Drama

Lady Montague  
died from grief  
upon Romeo's banishment

46. liege (lĕj): Lord.

Sees Romeo  
dead.

47. mouth of outrage:  
Violent cries.

48. general . . . woes:  
Leader in your sorrowing.

49. let . . . patience: Be  
patient in the face of mis-  
fortune.

50. direful: Terrible.  
51. impeach and purge:  
Accuse and declare blame-

Friar  
Admits  
yet  
refused faultless  
blame

52. date of breath: Term  
of life.

Friar tells  
what happened

• he married the  
• Tybalt's death  
resulted in Romeo's  
exile

When wedding to Paris  
was announced she  
went to Friar for help or  
she would kill herself

The form of death. Meantime I writ to Romeo  
That he should hither come as<sup>53</sup> this dire night  
To help to take her from her borrowed grave,  
Being the time the 'potion's force should cease,  
But he which bore my letter, Friar John,  $\rightarrow$  was held up + Romeo  
Was stayed by accident, and yesternight never got letter.  
Returned my letter back. Then all alone  
At the prefixed hour of her waking  
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;  
Meaning to keep her closely<sup>54</sup> at my cell  
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo.  
But when I came, some minute ere the time  
Of her awakening, here untimely lay  
The noble Paris and true Romeo dead.  
She wakes; and I entreated her come forth  
And bear this work of heaven with patience;  
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb,  
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,  
But, as it seems, did violence on herself.  
All this I know, and to the marriage  
Her nurse is privy;<sup>55</sup> and if aught in this  
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life  
Be sacrificed some hour before his time  
Unto the rigor<sup>56</sup> of severest law.

170 **PRINCE.** We still have known thee for a holy man.  
Where's Romeo's man? What can he say to this?

**BALTHASAR.** I brought my master news of Juliet's death;  
And then in post he came from Mantua  
To this same place, to this same monument.  
175 This letter he early bid me give his father,  
And threat'ned me with death, going in the vault,  
If I departed not and left him there.

**PRINCE.** Give me the letter. I will look on it.  
Where is the County's page that raised the watch?  
280 Sirrah, what made your master<sup>57</sup> in this place?

**BOY.** He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave;  
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did.  
Anon comes one with light to ope the tomb;  
And by and by my master drew on him;  
285 And then I ran away to call the watch.

**PRINCE.** This letter doth make good the friar's words,  
Their course of love, the tidings of her death;  
And here he writes that he did buy a poison

53. as: On.

54. closely: Hidden; secretly.

She wouldn't leave, so  
Friar did +  
She killed herself.

55. privy: Secretly informed about.

56. rigor: Strictness.

Balthasar tells  
what he knows  
+ provides Romeo's  
letter.

57. made your master:  
Was your master doing.

Letter backs up  
Friar's story

Of a poor apothecary and therewithal  
 290 Came to this vault to die and lie with Juliet.  
 Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague,  
 See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,  
 That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.

*Prince to families:  
 see what the feud  
 caused!*

And I, for winking at<sup>58</sup> your discords too,  
 295 Have lost a brace<sup>59</sup> of kinsmen. All are punished<sup>2</sup> *lost*

**58. winking at:** Closing my eyes to.  
**59. brace:** Pair (Mercutio and Paris).

**CAPULET.** O brother Montague, give me thy hand.  
 This is my daughter's jointure,<sup>60</sup> for no more  
 Can I demand.

*Capulet + Montague take each others hands*

**60. jointure:** Wedding gift; marriage settlement.

**MONTAGUE.** But I can give thee more:

For I will raise her statue in pure gold,  
 300 That whiles Verona by that name is known,  
 There shall no figure at such rate<sup>61</sup> be set  
 As that of true and faithful Juliet.

*Romeo's father says he will raise a statue of Juliet*

**61. rate:** Value.

**CAPULET.** As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie—  
 Poor sacrifices of our enmity!<sup>62</sup>

*Cap. agrees to do the same of Romeo*

**62. enmity:** Hostility; gloomy.

305 **PRINCE.** A glooming<sup>63</sup> peace this morning with it brings.

The sun for sorrow will not show his head.  
 Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things:  
 Some shall be pardoned, and some punished:  
 For never was a story of more woe

310 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

[Exit all.]

## RESPONDING TO THE SELECTION

### Your Response

1. Were you in any way surprised by the way in which this play ends? Why or why not?

### Recalling

2. At the start of Scene i, why is Romeo happy and expecting joyful news?
3. Why does the Friar go to Juliet's tomb?
4. What causes Paris and Romeo to fight?
5. How do Romeo and Juliet die?
6. How does the relationship of the feuding families change at the end of the play?

### Interpreting

7. Hearing Balthasar's report of Juliet's death (Scene i), Romeo exclaims, "Then I defy you,

stars!" What might he mean by this? How are his words consistent with what you know of his character?

8. Explain why the following words of Romeo over Juliet's body are ironic:

Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.  
 Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign yet  
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

9. Tell why you think that either character or chance plays the greater role in bringing about the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.

plying

In a good play, the ending develops from the preceding action. How would preceding events have to be changed so that *Romeo and Juliet* could have a happy ending?

## ANALYZING LITERATURE

### Understanding Tragedy and Theme

A **tragedy** is a drama in which the central character or characters suffer disaster or great misfortune. In many tragedies, the downfall results from fate, a serious character flaw, or a combination of the two. Other contributing causes may be present as well. The **theme** of a tragedy is the central idea or insight about life that explains why the downfall occurred.

1. What character traits of the lovers may have led to their destruction?
2. What events reveal the tragic influence of fate or chance?
3. What other causes or conditions are important to the way events turn out?
4. Using your answers to the preceding questions, write a one-sentence statement of the theme of *Romeo and Juliet*. You might put your sentence in a form like the following: "The theme of the play is that \_\_\_\_\_ leads to the destruction of \_\_\_\_\_."

## CRITICAL THINKING AND READING

### Interpreting Metaphorical Language

**Metaphorical language** involves a comparison of unlike things. For example, when Paris is standing over the apparently lifeless body of Juliet, he says, "Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew . . ." He is comparing Juliet to a flower and her tomb to a bridal bed. Such metaphorical language deepens meaning and expresses feelings and emotions in a way that ordinary, plain language often cannot.

To interpret metaphorical language, first clarify what the subject of the comparison is—what is the writer writing about? Then clarify what the subject is being compared to. Finally ask yourself, "What ideas, feelings, and emotions are suggested by the comparison?"

Interpret the following examples of metaphorical language from Act V.

1. "My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne . . ." (Romeo, Scene i, line 3)
2. "There is thy gold—worse poison to men's souls . . ." (Romeo to the Apothecary, Scene i, line 80)
3. "Thou detestable maw, . . . /Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth . . ." (Romeo opening Juliet's tomb, Scene iii, lines 45–46)

## THINKING AND WRITING

### Responding to Criticism

A well-known poet and critic, W. H. Auden, has said of *Romeo and Juliet* that it "is not simply a tragedy of two individuals, but the tragedy of a city. Everybody in the city is in one way or another involved in and responsible for what happens."

Write a brief essay in which you explain why you agree or disagree with this statement. First think about the many characters that appear in the play: the Prince, the Friar, Lords Capulet and Montague, their wives, relatives, and servants, and so on. Are all such characters "involved in and responsible for what happens"? Then decide in what sense the play can be thought the tragedy of a city, since the city does not lie slain at the end.

When you write your essay, deal directly with such issues as these to support your opinion of Auden's criticism. When you revise, check that you have included enough references to what is actually in the play to make your own views convincing.