

ROMEO AND JULIET

ACT THREE SCENE ONE, TWO & THREE

The marriage at the end of Act Two is the calm before the storm. Act Three opens with a hot afternoon, whereby trouble seems not far away.

1. What does Benvolio say to indicate this?

'The day is hot, the Capels are abroad and if we meet we shall not scape a brawl.'

Tybalt arrives searching for Romeo. He has written a challenge and expects Romeo to respond. Honour is at stake here. Romeo is not present and in the heat of the afternoon, Mercutio insults Tybalt.

2. What does Mercutio say to anger Tybalt?

'And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.'

Romeo arrives and Tybalt turns his attention away from Mercutio. He expects Romeo to answer his challenge and defend his honour. However, Romeo has just married Juliet, and therefore, now considers Tybalt in a different light – Tybalt is now a relation by marriage. Romeo does not want to fight.

3. What does Romeo say to Tybalt to indicate his new position?

'And so, good Capulet, which name I tender as dearly as mine own, be satisfied.'

Because Romeo does not fight, this angers Tybalt and he insults Romeo in order to provoke a response. Mercutio cannot stand by and listen to this and thus he challenges Tybalt.

4. What does Mercutio say to show he is willing to fight?

'Tybalt you rat catcher will you walk?...Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives...'

Romeo tries to stop the fighting, but his interference only confuses Mercutio and in this confusion, Tybalt strikes a fatal blow upon Mercutio. Before he dies he curses the two fighting families for 'forcing' his honour and making him fight.

5. What does Mercutio say?

'A plague a both your houses! They have made worms' meat of me...'

Romeo feels both guilt and anger that his best friend is dead and his honour has been stained. He blames his marriage to Juliet for making him weak.

6. What does Romeo say to show this?

'O sweet Juliet, thy beauty hath made me effeminate and in my temper soft'ned valor's steel.'

Romeo is enraged at the death of Mercutio and confronts the 'King of Cats', Tybalt with the line, "*Either thou or I or both must go with him.*" They fight and Tybalt is slain and Romeo immediately realises the consequences of his behaviour. Again, the fate of the stars has intervened.

7. What does Romeo say?

'O, I am fortune's fool.'

The Prince is placed into a difficult position by Lady Capulet who wants vengeance for Tybalt's death. She reminds the Prince of his previous decree that those who take a life will pay the penalty of their own. However, the Prince is informed by Benvolio that it was Tybalt who was the protagonist of the fight – he was the one who *'slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.'* Therefore lenience is shown and rather than death, Romeo is banished to Mantua.

8. Find the lines where the Prince hands down his decision.

'Immediately we do exile him hence...Let Romeo hence in haste, else, when he is found, that hour will be his last.'

In Act 3, Scene 2, Juliet is unaware of the street brawl and eagerly waits for Romeo to arrive at her chamber. However, her dreams are shattered when the Nurse comes in with conflicting reports about death and banishment. Once Juliet works out what the Nurse is saying, she subsides into grief.

In Act 3, Scene 3 Friar Lawrence decides on a course of action to assist Romeo. However, first he must calm down the distraught Romeo – he reminds him that he is blessed by the Prince's decision. Rather than death, Romeo is only banished... *'A pack of blessings light upon thy back.'*

The Friar's plan begins to take shape. He tells Romeo to go to Juliet's chamber to comfort Juliet and in the morning flee to Mantua. The Friar will then send word to Romeo via Balthasar, when the passions of the Veronan people have subsided and he may be able to return.