

## KEY WORDS

*Classical references, Counterproductive, Precedence, Iambic pentameter, Generational feuds, Naïve, Paternal Guidance, Abstract noun, Dramatic irony, Double entendre, Synonymous, Marital systems*

# Romeo Act 2

## ROMEO'S LACK OF PATERNAL GUIDANCE (ACT 2 SCENE 3)

- Romeo's greeting of **"Good morning father"** to father Lawrence, though Father Lawrence is in fact a priest, acts as a **double entendre** (has a dual meaning) for Romeo seeing him as a **paternal figure**.
- Romeo does not even confide in his own father; Father Lawrence is the **sole** (only) receiver of Romeo's confession of intent to marry Juliet as he claims, **"both our remedies/ Within thy help and holy physic lies"**. He characterises marriage to be a **"remedy"** or a **"physic"** (medicine, or cure for illness) which in turn paints the **Capulet and Montague feud to be a sickness. Romeo is more trusting in the divine power of religion** than his own father.
- He **"pray[s]"** that Lawrence **"chide not"** like a son might to a father and asserts **"grace for grace and love for love allow"**. The **repetition** of the **abstract nouns** **"grace"** and **"love"** demonstrate Romeo to be open with his emotions to Lawrence; to be vulnerable with him. Shakespeare **shows religion to be a sanctuary (safe space) for Romeo** to express his feelings and Lawrence a father figure in place of Romeo's real father who would not help him.
- This is **dramatically ironic**, though, given the events that unfold in the rest of the play, which might be a critique of religion on Shakespeare's part, not overtly, but given that the lovers are doomed despite their marriage it seems **even religion cannot save them**.

## COMPARISON

Romeo's partnership with Juliet, while not **socially condoned** in the world of the play, is far more favoured by a potential audience than her potential partnership with Paris because it is one of genuine love. It is certainly favoured by the narrative in that Paris is portrayed as annoying, in comparison to Romeo who is passionate and possesses exceptional chemistry with Juliet.

## ROMEO LOVE VS GENERATIONAL FEUDS (ACT 2 SCENE 2)

- He declares, in response to her question of how he cleared the property's walls to reach her, that **"with love's wings did [he] o'erperch these walls, for stony limits cannot hold love out"**. This **dispels any notion** that he is not willing to clear any wall for her and is thus, by extension, willing to ignore his family's feud with her's, to be with her.
- The metaphor he employs evokes (makes the audience think about) cupid. He is making a **classical reference** with **"love's wings"** and making apparent that love is powerful enough that it can **overcome physical boundaries**.
- Furthermore, Romeo speaks in verse, in **iambic pentameter** in fact, and this characterises him to be romantic and decorative in his language showing love to take **precedence** (priority) over family rivalries in this scene. You might say this particular scene is separate from the violence of the world of the play, **ensconced** (wrapped up in) in its own personal bubble of love and hope.
- He reinforces this idea again, suggesting that **"there lies more peril in [her] eye / Than twenty of their swords"**, making the **wild yet romantic** notion that a look from her might pose more danger than his enemies' swords. He implies love to be a dangerous thing with this line, capable of causing far more pain than any physical weapon.
- He asserts that he would rather be killed by Capulet swords than **"death prorogued, wanting of thy love"**. It is clear that he is willing to **surmount** (overcome) any obstacle and would rather die than to be without Juliet demonstrating clearly **the dire implications of generational feuds**.
- The play shows these feuds to be **counterproductive**, as they only **culminate** (result) in more violence for later generations who are blameless and **naïve** (unaware) of the initial feud.

Mention of specific language features like iambic pentameter or identifying classical references (AO2) is extremely important. You need to make sure your answer covers all factors of the mark scheme: e.g. analysing the text critically (AO1), referencing the text with judicious (short but effective) quotes (AO1), analysing language, form and structure with terminology (AO2), understanding contexts (AO3) and using a range of vocabulary (AO4).



TOP TIP

## ROMEO SOCIALISED TO DESIRE MARRIAGE AND IS THUS EASILY MANIPULATED (ACT 2 SCENE 6)

- Marriage is manipulated by many of the adults in the play to achieve their own gains; Juliet being encouraged to marry Paris is an example of this, as it would **socially and financially benefit her family**. Romeo's desire to marry, Juliet claiming he wants to **"call her [his]"**, shows he has been **socialised** (taught by society) to view **marriage as a necessary expression of love**.
- He even comes close to realising that marriage is not necessary for lovers to be content when he requests, she **"unfold the imagined happiness that both/ Receive [...] by this dear encounter"**. **"Imagined happiness"** exemplifies that he is at least aware that **marriage is not synonymous with (does not equal) happiness** but he seems to lack awareness that marriage is not the only way to express deep love for someone.
- Friar Lawrence encourages the marriage entirely because he believes it will end the **feud** between the Capulets and Montague, not out of sympathy for their **plight** (problem).
- Their desire to marry likely has a **religious basis** given the controversy around **pre-marital intercourse** (sex outside of marriage), but the lovers **eloping** (marrying without telling anyone) would be just as controversial and thus **they are doomed either way**. Friar Lawrence, had he any real empathy for the couple and put his personal motives aside, might have **dissuaded them** (told them no) from it. Given the play's **tragedy genre** his encouragement appears **unsettling** where it might have been kind.

- In fact, Romeo is quite willing to risk even death for Juliet, as he claims that **"love devouring-death [should] do what he dare"**, and so his insistence on marriage seems **absurd**. His desire to marry Juliet **stems** purely from the fact he has been **socialised** to believe it is necessary and this is manipulated by the friar to **further his agenda**.
- This portrayal of marriage seems **calculated** (put in on purpose) by Shakespeare and represents the **innate** (internal) flaws in the **marital systems** (systems of marriage) in place during his time. It shows marriage to often be a **medium** (way) through which parents might receive a gain and not solely performed for love, as it ideally would be.

## COMPARISON

Romeo's father is noticeably absent from this act where a considerable decision is made in regard to his son. Father Lawrence takes a paternal role in this act and thus, as an audience we are forced to compare the two. Where Romeo's father is unavailable, and likely would be unsympathetic towards his plight, Father Lawrence is understanding and willing to help Romeo.

## COMPARISON

Friar Lawrence and Romeo exemplify the theme of young vs the old in this act. Romeo values love and freedom from his family's restrictive hostility towards Juliet's. Father Lawrence, however, values the diffusion of the conflict between the two family's, prioritising politics over love.



**Be careful in asserting notions such as, 'Shakespeare was critical of religion', as there is little known of Shakespeare's true religious disposition (stance) and it would show a misunderstanding of context (AO3) to attribute (say he has) anti-religious opinions to him without sufficient evidence.**

## TOPIC SENTENCES

- Romeo passionate and wild declaration of love for Juliet, despite her position as a member of the Capulet family, represent that **love knows no bounds** and generational grudges and feuds are often **counterproductive** for later generations.
- Romeo's confession of love to father Lawrence as opposed to his own father shows him to have a lack **paternal** (fatherly) **guidance** from his own father and thus to **gravitate towards** (be attracted to) the non-judgemental, understanding characteristics associated with religion and thus Father Lawrence.
- Marriage as an institution is emphasised by Shakespeare to be **manipulated by adults for social, political or economic gain**. Romeo is young and while he is rebellious in many ways his **folly** (flaw), he is intent on marrying Juliet which allows him to be manipulated by the friar

