Romeo + Juliet: Act 1 Study Guide

As you read the Prologue, write your own translation of it in the right column.

Two households, both alike in dignity 1

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene, 2

From ancient grudge break to new mutiny, 3

Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean. 4

Your “translation.” What does this stanza mean?

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes 5

A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life; 6

Whose misadventured piteous overthrows 7

Do with their death bury their parent's strife. 8

Your “translation.” What does this stanza mean?

The fearful passage of their death-marked love 9

And the continuance of their parent's rage, 10

Which, but their children's end, naught could remove, 11

Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage; 12

Your “translation.” What does this stanza mean?

The which, if you with patient ears attend, 13

What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend. 14

Your “translation.” What does this stanza mean?

1. Summarize: The prologue is meant to preview the entire play. Summarize in your own words below. A minimum of three sentences is necessary.

2. Role of Fate vs. Free Will: According to the prologue, do people have control over their own lives (free will) or are humans victims of fate? Find the diction from the passage that proves your stance.

Act 1, Scene 1

A) Tybalt: He speaks only five lines, but they tell a great deal about him. Characterize him based on these lines. Find specific diction to prove your stance.

B) What is consuming Romeo? Why is he behaving like this? Describe him using 2-3 words - be thoughtful of your diction choices.

C) Oxymorons are phrases which include contradictory words. For instance, "loving hate." Below, write 2-3 oxymorons Romeo uses in his speech. How do these work to further establish his character?

Act 1, Scene 2

A) In one sentence, summarize the plot of 1.2:

Act 1, Scene 3

A) Juliet says little throughout this scene. Read all her lines and then write down your impressions of her character thus far. Identify the diction to prove your stance.

B) Characterize the Nurse in this scene. Compare & contrast her relationship with Juliet to Juliet’s relationship with her mother.

Act 1, Scene 4

A) Mercutio's Queen Mab Monologue

ii. Evaluate if Queen Mab is the queen of good dreams, nightmares, or both? Explain.

iii. Reread Mercutio's exchange with Romeo at the end of the scene. Infer what Mercutio thinks of dreams?

iv. Based on his monologue, infer what kind of person Mercutio is? Identify the diction in support of your stance.

B) Romeo's fearful dream:

a. Fate vs. Freewill is one of our topics. Look carefully at Romeo's diction. What is the tone of this passage?

b. Infer if Romeo seems to believe his life is controlled by fate or by his personal free will. Why?

Act 1, Scene 5

A) Capulet simply will not tolerate Tybalt's intention to pick a fight at the party.

a. Characterize Capulet based on his exchange with Tybalt. Identify the specific diction in support of your stance.

b. Continue to characterize Tybalt by making connections from Act 1. Scene 1 to Scene 5 in his exchange with Capulet. Predict how his role will impact the play.

B) Romeo and Juliet's Lovers’ Sonnet Close Read:

Romeo:

If I profane with my unworthiest hand 1

This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this: 2

My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand 3

To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss. 4

Annotations: Your “translation.”

What does this stanza mean?

Juliet:

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, 5

Which mannerly devotion shows in this; 6

For saints have hands that pilgrims’ hands do touch, 7

And palm to palm is holy palmers’ kiss. 8

Annotations: Your “translation.”

What does this stanza mean?

Romeo: Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too? 9

Juliet: Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer. 10

Romeo: O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do; 11

They pray — grant thou, lest faith turn to despair 12

Annotations: Your “translation.”

What does this stanza mean?

Juliet: Saints do not move, though grant for prayers’ sake. 13

Romeo: Then move not, while my prayer’s effect I take. 14

Annotations: Your “translation.”

What does this stanza mean?

a. Infer: Why does Romeo use religious imagery?

b. Evaluate Romeo’s feelings of love:

c. Infer Juliet’s emotions:

d. Evaluate: Do you believe they are genuinely in love? \_YES \_NO (Place X)

List 4 reasons why:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Characterization of Romeo: Given all the textual evidence presented in Act I of the play, characterize Romeo. Consider multiple methods of characterization and use cited quotations to substantiate your characterization.

What he says:

What he thinks:

His actions:

What others say about him: