ROMEO & JULIET

STUDY QUESTIONS: Record your answers, in RACE format when applicable, on a separate sheet of paper. All answers must be in complete sentences.

Prologue/Act 1, Sc. 1

1. In which town is the play set? In what county do you suppose this town exists? (Yes, this is a real place on our planet.)
2. In the prologue, Shakespeare tells us that our two title characters are going to kill themselves. His 1600’s audience would’ve already known the story of Romeo & Juliet from a famous poem of the time, so this information would not have ruined the experience. In fact, many scholars say that knowing the deaths are coming actually improves the play. How could this be? Explain your thoughts.
3. When Sampson says he will not “carry coals,” what does he mean? What literary technique is being used in this silly exchange between Sampson and Gregory?
4. Complete this sentence: In Shakespearean times, biting your thumb was…
   1. A gesture of friendship
   2. An insult
   3. A way of hitting someone
   4. What you did when you were a baby
5. How many times have the Capulets and the Montagues had street fights recently?
6. How has Romeo been spending his days recently?
   1. Picking fights on the boardwalk
   2. Locked in his room heartbroken
   3. Dreaming of Juliet
   4. Checking out young ladies on the boardwalk
7. List three oxymorons Romeo uses to describe the conflict between his family and the Capulets. Then, explain how the family feud is oxymoronic in its nature.
8. Who is the girl Romeo is heartsick over? Why doesn’t she like Romeo?
9. What does Benvolio tell Romeo to do in order to forget the girl who doesn’t want him?

Act 1, Sc. 2

1. How old is Juliet? What are her father’s thoughts about allowing her to marry?
2. Why is the Capulet servant upset about having been given a list of party guests to find?
3. What does Romeo want to happen to his eyes if they find someone other that Rosaline desirable at the party? What does this show us about Romeo?

Act 1, Sc. 3

1. Does Lady Capulet want Juliet to love Paris?
   1. No. She tells Juliet that she shouldn’t judge a book by its cover.
   2. Yes. She says Paris is a gorgeous book and Juliet will be the cover.
   3. Yes. He’s very educated with a bachelor’s degree in English literature.
   4. No. She know Juliet loves Romeo and wants them to marry.
2. What is Juliet’s reaction to her mother’s request? What does this show use about Juliet?

Act 1, Sc. 4

1. According to Mercutio, who or what is Queen Mab, and what does she do?
2. What does Romeo say about the value of dreams?
3. What does Mercutio say about the value of dreams?
4. At the end of Scene 4, Romeo mentions the subject of his latest vivid dream. What did Romeo dream? Why isn’t he changing his course of action? What does this show us about Romeo?

Act 1, Sc. 5

1. When Romeo first sees Juliet, what terms does he use to describe her?
2. How does Tybalt recognize Romeo?
3. When Tybalt is ready to seize Romeo and throw him out of the party, what does Capulet say to Tybalt? Why? What is Tybalt’s reaction to this?
4. How does Romeo find out Juliet’s last name?
5. How does Juliet find out Romeo’s last name?

Act 2, Sc. 1

1. What does the Act 2 Prologue say happened to Romeo’s love for Rosaline? How is this an example of foreshadowing?
2. Who does Mercutio think that Romeo is in love with in his speech in Scene 1, lines 10-21? What is funny about these lines?

Act 2, Sc. 2

1. When Romeo says, “He jests at scars that never felt a wound,” what does he mean?
2. What does Romeo compare Juliet to in his first speech in Scene 2, lines 2-3?
3. In your own words, rewrite Juliet’s speech in Scene 2, lines 35-38. Go line-be-line as you restate her meaning.
4. When Juliet says, “That which we find a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet,” what does she mean? Do names matter in our lives? If you had a different name, do you think you might have grown up to be a slightly different person?
5. Why does Juliet ask Romeo not to swear his love’s allegiance by the moon?
6. What day does Juliet instruct Romeo to send her the next day?

Act 2, Sc. 3

1. According to the Friar in line 29, how are humans like plants?
2. With whom does Friar Laurence assume Romeo has spent the night?
3. In lines 92-96, the Friar says, “O, she knew well / Thy love did read by rote and could not spell.” Explain what he means here.
4. Why does the Friar begrudgingly agree to marry Romeo and Juliet?

Act 2, Sc. 4

1. Who are Laura, Dido Cleopatra, Helen, and Hero? What does Mercutio say about them?
2. How does Mercutio treat the Nurse?
   1. He adores her and wants her to be his mom
   2. He mistakenly thinks that she is Rosaline
   3. He makes up rude jokes about her
   4. He is secretly in love with her
3. What instructions does Romeo tell the Nurse to pass on to Juliet?
4. Who does the Nurse say also wants to marry Juliet? What does she say Juliet’s feelings are for this other suitor?

Act 2, Sc. 5

1. What time of day is it?
2. How long has the Nurse been gone on her errand to find Romeo?
3. What’s ‘humorous about the way the Nurse treats Juliet in this scene?

Act 2, Sc. 6

1. In your own words, explain the Friar’s warning in these lines:

“These violent delights have violent ends

And in their triumph die like dire and powder,

Which, as they kiss, consume.”

1. In your own words, explain the Friar’s message in these lines:

“Therefore love moderately; long love doth so:

Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.”

1. What happens at the very end of this scene?