Romeo and Juliet Act 1 Notes

Act 1 Prologue
- Summary of the play
- Setting: Verona, Italy
- Old argument between two families causes fights/riots
- There are two “star-crossed lovers”
  - ill-fated
  - not meant to be together
  - “From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
   A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life;”
- Only the deaths of Romeo and Juliet can end the argument
  - They are the “star-crossed” lovers
- The play should take two hours to perform

Act 1, Scene 1
- Capulet servants boast about fighting Montagues (enemy)
- Capulet servant insults/ bites his thumb at Montague servant which starts a fight (riot)
- Benvolio arrives and tries to break up fight
  - Benvolio: Part, fools!
    Put up your swords; you know not what you do.
- Tybalt provokes Benvolio into fighting
  - Tybalt: What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,
    As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:
    Have at thee, coward!
- Prince Escalus arrives, stops fight, and sentences the family that starts the next fight/riot to death.
  - Prince: If ever you disturb our streets again,
    Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace
- Lord Montague and wife and Lord Capulet both appear at the scene
  - Lord Capulet is most interested in fighting
  - Lady Montague & Lady Capulet encourage their husbands not to fight
- Romeo’s parents (the Montagues) and Benvolio discuss Romeo’s mood.
  - Lord Montague: Away from the light steals home my heavy son,
    And private in his chamber pens himself,
    Shuts up his windows, locks far daylight out
    And makes himself an artificial night:
  - Benvolio has seen Romeo wandering around.
  - He sees that Romeo wants to be left alone; so, he doesn’t bother him.
- Romeo tells Benvolio that he is depressed
  - Romeo loves Rosaline. (Romeo is obsessed with her.)
  - Rosaline wants nothing to do with him; she has sworn off love and men to become a nun
- Benvolio wants Romeo to look at other girls to date
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**Act 1, Scene 2**
- Count Paris, who is 21, asks Lord Capulet if he can marry Juliet.
- Capulet would like Paris to wait 2 years
- [All of Juliet's siblings are dead]
- Capulet will agree to the marriage only if Juliet also agrees. He tells Paris to begin wooing her
  - **Lord Capulet:** But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
    My will to her consent is but a part;
    An she agree, within her scope of choice
    Lies my consent and fair according voice.
- Benvolio and Romeo find out about the Capulets' party.
- 1. Romeo reads the guest list for an illiterate servant.
- 2. Rosaline is invited to the party. **Romeo is interested in going now!**
- Benvolio talks Romeo into crashing the party.
  - 1. Benvolio wants Romeo to compare Rosaline to other girls.
  - 2. He thinks Romeo will realize that there are other women in the world.
  - **Benvolio:** Go thither; and, with unattainted eye,
    Compare her face [Rosaline’s] with some that I shall show,
    And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

**Act 1, Scene 3**
- Lady Capulet goes to see Juliet about marrying Paris.
  - **Lady Capulet:** Well, think of marriage now; younger than you,
    Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,
    Are made already mothers: by my count,
    I was your mother much upon these years
    That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:
    The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.
- Nurse rambles on and on; says Juliet will be 14 in 2 weeks. She speaks crude comments about Juliet, showing her lower class
- Juliet says that she hasn't thought about marriage at all.
  - It does not appear she wants to marry Paris
  - but she is obedient to her mother's wishes.
  - **Juliet to Lady Capulet:** I'll look to like, if looking liking move:
    But no more deep will I endart mine eye
    Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.
- Nurse thinks that marrying Paris would be a good idea.
- Juliet agrees to meet Paris at the party and consider his offer of marriage.

**Act 1, Scene 4**
- Romeo, Benvolio, Mercutio, and friends are on their way to crash the party.
  - 1. Romeo doesn’t want to go as he is still depressed.
  - 2. Says he will not dance.
- The guys are wearing masks at the party to hide their identities.
- Mercutio tries to cheer Romeo up by talking about his dream.
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- Romeo fears that something bad is going to come of this night; i.e. he might die.
  - **Romeo:** I fear, too early: for my mind misgives
    Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
    Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
    With this night’s revels and expire the term
    Of a despised life closed in my breast
    By some vile forfeit of untimely death. FOreshadowing

- **Mercutio’s Queen Mab Monologue:**
  - Queen Mab = an imaginary fairy who brings dreams of people’s fantasies & fears to them as they sleep
  - **Romeo** says he listens to his dreams
  - Mercutio uses the Queen Mab speech to tell Romeo to ignore his dreams; dreams are nonsense– he gives many examples

Act 1, Scene 5

- Lord Capulet welcomes all to his party.
- Romeo sees Juliet across the room and falls in ‘love’ with Juliet. (Rosaline who?)
  - **Romeo:** O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
    It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
    Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope’s ear
  - Tybalt, who is a hothead, overhears Romeo talking about Juliet and instantly wants to kill him.
    - **Tybalt:** Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,/ A villain that is hither come in spite,
      To scorn at our solemnity this night  FOreshadowing
  - Lord Capulet stops Tybalt from fighting in his house and warns him to calm down or to leave the party.
  - Lord Capulet reminds Tybalt that Romeo is behaving
  - Romeo and Juliet meet but do not exchange names.
  - They instantly fall in “love.”
    - Romeo worships Juliet with religious devotion
    - Saints and prayers are referenced in their dialogue
  - As people are leaving, Nurse tells Romeo who Juliet is. She is a Capulet and his enemy.
    - **Romeo to Nurse:** Is she a Capulet?
      O dear account! my life is my foe’s debt.
  - Nurse also identifies Romeo for Juliet. He is a Montague and her enemy.
    - **Juliet to Nurse:** Go ask his name: if he be married.
      My grave is like to be my wedding bed.
    - **Juliet to Nurse:** My only love sprung from my only hate!
      Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
      Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
      That I must love a loathed enemy.
  - Both Romeo and Juliet are depressed at these discoveries. Now what?
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See PowerPoint to accompany notes.

Play Quia review games and take my Quia practice quizzes to prepare yourself for quizzes and the final exam.