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Romeo and Juliet Dialectical Journal Act 1

Act 1

Sampson and Gregory are servants from the house of the Capulet. They are in a marketplace talking about their hatred for the Montagues. In the middle of their conversation they see Abraham and Balthazar, servants for the Montagues. The servants confront one another and then fight (1.1, 1-60).

Benvolio, Romeo's cousin, enters the stage and tries to break up the fight. Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, enters the stage and picks a fight with Tybalt (1.1, 59-67).

The Prince breaks up the fight. He is upset because this is the third time the Capulets and the Montagues have fought in public. The Prince says that the next time this happens, those involved will be punished by death (1.1, 78-100).

Romeo has spent the night crying in the woods. He did not participate in the fight (1.1, 114-153).

"Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health," (1.1, 177)

"With cupid's arrow, she hath Diane's wit," (1.1, 208)

Act 1

The opening of the play shows that the **hatred** between the two households is even felt by the lowly servants. The servants clearly feel a deep **loyalty** to their lords.

Benvolio is a peacemaker. He is benevolent. Tybalt is filled with anger and creates conflict. Tybalt is a Tyrant. Because of their opposite character traits they are considered **character foils**.

The Prince has the respect but also fear of his people. The Prince is also neutral on the conflict - he has not sided with either family; rather, he has the best interests of Verona in mind. I predict that there will be another fight and the Prince will have to keep his word and punish the offenders with death.

Romeo is a sensitive guy who is clearly depressed. He is hiding from the people who care about him so he must feel ashamed or confused about something in his life.

Romeo tells Benvolio about his unrequited love for Rosaline. Romeo is love sick. This shows that Romeo trusts Benvolio. It also shows that Romeo has a way with words... he is a smooth talker.

Romeo is educated. He thinks Rosaline is immune to anyone's charms. He suggests that she is like the goddess Diane who is committed to a life of chastity and that she is wasting her beauty by never having kids.

Capulet's Speech

Capulet tells Paris, "My daughter is yet a stranger to the world. / She hath not seen the change of fourteen years.... And too soon married are those so early made.... My will to consent is but a part, / An she agreed within her scope of choice, / Lies my consent and fair according voice" (1.2, 9-34).

Capulet is protective of his daughter, Juliet. This is an example of familial love. He wants his daughter to marry when she is ready and has found a person she loves. He invites Paris to court Juliet. This creates a potential conflict because we know Romeo and Juliet will fall in love so what will become of Paris and his love for Juliet?

"But I am sent to find those persons whose names are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person hath here writ. I must to the learned in good time!" (1.2, 40-44).

The servant cannot read the list of names he is supposed to invite to the party. His problem plays an important part of moving the plot forward. If he could read, he never would have asked for Romeo and Benvolio's help and Romeo would have never been persuaded to go to the Capulet's party.

Dramatic Irony

"My master is the great rich Capulet, and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray come and crush a cup of wine. Rest you merry!" (1.2, 80-83)

The irony is that we know Romeo is of the house of Montague but the servant does not; therefore we (the audience) know more than a character on the stage. Had the servant known Romeo was a Montague, he probably would not have asked for his help.

Benvolio's Advice:

"Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by, / Herself poised with herself in either eye. / But in that crystal scales let there be weighed / Your lady's love against some other maid" (1.2, 96-99).

This is the exact same advice that Capulet gives to Paris regarding his courtship of Juliet. While Benvolio thinks going to the party will help Romeo, it will actually lead to his death because he meets Juliet and their tragic relationship begins.

Foils – The Nurse and Juliet’s Mother

“Tis since the earthquake now eleven years.... For I had then laid wormwood to my dug.... Shake! Quoth the dovehouse.” (1.3, 20-53)

Purpose of the Nurse

Lady Capulet’s Speech

“Examine every married lineament So shall you share all that he doth possess, / By having him, making yourself no less.” (1.3, 84-99)

The Nurse is excitable and provides comic relief. Lady Capulet is serious and seems kind of cold. Based on our meeting of the Nurse and Lady Capulet, Juliet might be closer to the Nurse.

The Nurse has fond memories of Juliet as a child. The story here tells of wormwood, an earthquake, and a joke Nurse’s husband made about Juliet losing her virginity. This is foreshadowing the rest of the play... Wormwood means curse or poisoned, and Juliet will lose her virginity to Romeo and their death will shake the foundation of Verona and end the grudge between the Montagues and the Capulets.

The Nurse provides comic relief and she is Juliet’s closest friend. There are no secrets between the Nurse and Juliet.

Lady Capulet tells Juliet to marry Paris. She tells Juliet that he is handsome and rich so she would be lucky to marry him. The reason’s Lady Capulet gives are shallow which makes us question if she has Juliet’s best interests in mind.

Act 1.4

Romeo’s attitude:

“Give me a torch, I am not for this ambling. / Being but heavy, I will bear the light.”

Romeo is too sad to dance. This is also imagery of light and dark. The night is dark and Romeo wants to hold the torch. The torches flame can symbolize his undying love for Rosaline at this

Mercutio and Benvolio

Mercutio matches Romeo's wit line for line.

Romeo: "I have a soul of lead / So stakes me to the ground I cannot move."

Mercutio: "Borrow Cupid's wings / And soar with them above a common bound." (1.4 15-18)

Romeo: "Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, / Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like a thorn." (25-26)

Mercutio: If love be rough with, be rough with love. / Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down. –

Mercutio tries to motivate Romeo to cheer him up. He tells Romeo to move on and suggests the way to move on is to meet another girl and have sex with her.

Mercutio and Benvolio have now tried to cheer up Romeo by pointing out the flaws in his thinking. They seem to have the best of intentions, but there is some irony here because when Romeo finally gets over Rosaline he falls for Juliet and that will eventually kill him.

Mercutio goes into this long winded and witty monologue about Queen Mab who he describes to be this fairy who visits people at night and makes them dream of immoral and unethical things.

Romeo is disturbed by what Mercutio says: "Though talk'st of nothing." (1.4, 101).

Mercutio agrees with Romeo, "True, I talk of dreams, / Which are the children of an idle brain, / Begot of nothing but vain fantasy." (1.4, 102-104)

Mercutio's point is that dreams are just an illusion – they are fantasy and that we should not put any value into them. Romeo, however, is disturbed by the dream he had because his dream was about tonight. He dreamt that something was going to happen tonight that would eventually lead to his early death. While Mercutio's advice seems to be in Romeo's best interest, the reality is that Romeo's dream will come true. Should he have listened to his dreams and not his friends?

Act 1.5

Capulet's monologue:

"A hall, a hall, give room! And foot it girls!"

Capulet invites his guests to dance. He makes it clear that he wants to see everyone dancing together and having a great time. While he did not know that this dancing would be where Romeo and Juliet first kiss, he did, in a very

Romeo's infatuation/love at first sight:

"O she doth teach the torches to burn bright / It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night / As rich as a jewel in an Ethiop's ear." (1.5, 45-54)

Romeo compares Juliet to a torch by saying that she is brighter (and hotter) than any other torch. He also compares her to a jeweled earring on a dark skinned person (the dark skin makes the jewel stand out). This is Romeo falling in love with Juliet at first sight. He has forgot all about Rosaline.

Tybalt vs Capulet about Romeo:

Tybalt: "'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

Capulet: "Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone," (1.5, 66-67)

Tybalt is furious that Romeo is at the party, but Capulet tells Tybalt to come down and leave Romeo alone. Tybalt listens to his uncle, but he vows to find Romeo later and fight him. This is another conflict that may interfere with Romeo and Juliet's relationship.

Foreshadowing and Simile:

Juliet: "Go ask his name. If he be married, / My grave is like to be my wedding bed." (1.5, 141-142)

Basically, Juliet says that if Romeo is married then she will die unmarried. The simile she creates, "My grave is like to be my wedding bed" foreshadows her eventual death after she marries Romeo.

Sonnet:

"If I profane with my unworhiest hand.... Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take." (1.5, 97-110)

This is a unique sonnet because it is dialogue. These are the first words Romeo and Juliet exchange and the right after Romeo says the last line of the sonnet they kiss. This sets the stage for the rest of the play. Romeo seems to have forgotten about Rosaline and Juliet may no longer be considering Paris.

Inciting incident:

Nurse: "Marry, bachelor, / Her mother is the lady of the house." (1.5, 118-119)

The Nurse interrupts Romeo and Juliet right after they kiss. It is possible she say them kiss and made up the story about Juliet's mom wanting to see her. Nevertheless, the nurse informs Romeo that Juliet is a Capulet. Now, Romeo knows where to find Juliet... if he wants to find her.