

Romeo and Juliet Act 4 Summary Notes

Act 4, Scene 1

- Paris goes to Friar Laurence's
 - Paris tells him that he is to marry Juliet on Thursday.
 - Paris explains that the marriage will cure Juliet's grief over Tybalt
- Friar Laurence tries to postpone it.
 - He says the marriage to Paris occurs so quickly (*Irony*)

- Juliet arrives at Friar Laurence's
- Juliet speaks with Paris who is excited to see her
 - She side-steps the idea of marriage with him
 - She tells him she must make confession to Friar.
- PARIS *Come you to make confession to this father?*
- JULIET *To answer that, I should confess to you.*
- PARIS *Do not deny to him that you love me.*
- JULIET *I will confess to you that I love him.*

- After Paris leaves Friar Laurence's, Juliet:
 - tells Friar Laurence that he must help her avoid this marriage
 - or she'll kill herself.
 - many morbid images of death occur in her speech
- Juliet: *Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it:
If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently.*
- Juliet: *Be not so long to speak; I long to die,
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.*

- Friar Laurence has a plan:
 - Juliet must pretend to die.
 - Juliet is to go home,
 - agree to marry Paris.
 - On Wednesday night she is to drink a sleeping potion.
 - She will sleep for 42 hours.
- Juliet: *O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of yonder tower. . .
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears. . .
O'er-cover'd quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave*

- Juliet's family will think she is dead.
- They will bury her in the Capulet tomb (not a coffin)
- Friar Laurence will send a letter to Mantua telling Romeo to return to Verona
- So that Romeo will be there when she wakes up.

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- **Romeo and Friar Laurence will get Juliet out of the tomb.**
- **She will leave to Mantua with Romeo**
- ***What could possibly go wrong?***
- **Friar Laurence:** *Take thou this vial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off. . .
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
To paly ashes, thy eyes' windows fall,
Like death, when he shuts up the day of life;*

Act 4, Scene 2

- **Juliet returns home and agrees to marry Paris.**
- **Juliet to Lord Capulet:** *Where I have learn'd me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition
To you and your behests, and am enjoin'd
By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,
And beg your pardon: pardon, I beseech you!
Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.*
- **Her family happily prepares for the wedding.**
- **Her father moves the wedding up one day to Wednesday.**
 - **He is thrilled that Juliet has agreed to marry Paris**
 - **His actions show his rash decision making**
- **Lord Capulet:** *Send for the county; go tell him of this:
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning.*

- **Problems arise as a result of Lord Capulet moving the wedding date forward a day**
 - **Juliet must take the sleeping potion 24 hours sooner than Friar Laurence had planned**
 - **The Friar will have less time to notify Romeo in Mantua of the plans**
 - **What do you think will happen?**

Act 4, Scene 3

- **Juliet goes to bed and tells the Nurse to leave her alone.**
- **Juliet thinks Friar may have given her actual poison to cover himself for marrying a Capulet to a Montague**
- **She decides that if the potion doesn't work right she will stab herself with a dagger**
 - **She shows she refuses to marry Paris**
 - **She keeps the dagger by her bedside**

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- **Juliet worries that the potion won't work right. (Soliloquy)**
 - She is afraid that might wake up to soon
 - and be trapped inside the tomb.
 - Romeo will not come to save her in time.
 - She thinks she'll see Tybalt's ghost.
 - and go insane and "bash out her brains" with one of Tybalt's bones
- **Juliet drinks the potion when she imagines Tybalt's ghost finding Romeo to avenge his death.**
- **Taking the sleeping potion indicates the first time Juliet thinks for herself**
- **Juliet:** *O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears?
And madly play with my forefather's joints?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?*

Act 4, Scene 4

- **On Wednesday morning, wedding preparations continue happily.**
- **The Nurse is sent to wake up Juliet.**
- **Lord Capulet sees Paris approaching.**

Act 4, Scene 5

- **It is Wednesday morning.**
- **The Nurse goes to Juliet's room to wake her**
 - The Nurse is joking about how little sleep Juliet will get on her wedding night
 - Then, she thinks Juliet is "dead" and cries out to the family.
- **Juliet's parents, Paris, and Friar Laurence arrive and mourn her death.**
 - **Lord Capulet** speaks now of "Death" as Juliet's bridegroom rather than Paris.
 - **Capulet:** *Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,
Flower as she was, deflowered by him.
Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;
My daughter he hath wedded: I will die,
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.*

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- **Friar Laurence blames Juliet's parents for her death because they pushed to marry Paris.**
 - **Friar reminds the Capulet's that they wanted Juliet to marry Paris to advance their status.**
 - **Friar Laurence:** *Your part in her you could not keep from death,
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
The most you sought was her promotion;
For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced:
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?*
 - **Friar also states that being married young and happy is better than being married unhappily and for a long time (*Dramatic Irony*)**
- **They leave and take Juliet to be buried in the Capulet's tomb.**
- **Capulet tells the staff to turn all wedding preparations to funeral preparations.**