**JULIET**

Modern

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Good-bye. Only God knows when we’ll meet again. There is a slight cold fear cutting through my veins. It almost freezes the heat of life. I’ll call them back here to comfort me. Nurse!—Oh, what good would she do here?

In my desperate situation, I have to act alone.

Alright, here’s the vial. What if this mixture doesn’t work at all? Will I be married tomorrow morning? No, no, this knife will stop it. Lie down right there.

*(she lays down the knife)* What if the Friar mixed the potion to kill me? Is he worried that he will be disgraced if I marry Paris after he married me to Romeo? I’m afraid that it’s poison. And yet, it shouldn’t be poison because he is a trustworthy holy man. What if, when I am put in the tomb, I wake up before Romeo comes to save me? That’s a frightening idea. Won’t I suffocate in the tomb? There’s no healthy air to breathe in there. Will I die of suffocation before Romeo comes? Or if I live, I’ll be surrounded by death and darkness. It will be terrible. There will be bones hundreds of years old in that tomb, my ancestors' bones. Tybalt’s body will be in there, freshly entombed, and his corpse will be rotting. They say that during the night the spirits are in tombs. Oh no, oh no. I’ll wake up and smell awful odors. I’ll hear screams that would drive people crazy.

If I wake up too early, won’t I go insane with all these horrible, frightening things around me, start playing with my ancestors' bones, and pull Tybalt’s corpse out of his death shroud? Will I grab one of my dead ancestor’s bones and bash in my own skull? Oh, look! I think I see my cousin Tybalt’s ghost. He’s looking for Romeo because Romeo killed him with his sword. Wait, Tybalt, wait! Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here’s a drink. I drink to you.

Original

Farewell!—God knows when we shall meet again.

I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins

That almost freezes up the heat of life.

I’ll call them back again to comfort me.—

Nurse!—What should she do here?

My dismal scene I needs must act alone.

Come, vial. *(holds out the vial)*

What if this mixture do not work at all?

Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?

No, no. This shall forbid it. Lie thou there.

*(lays her knife down)*

What if it be a poison, which the friar

Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,

Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored

Because he married me before to Romeo?

I fear it is. And yet, methinks, it should not,

For he hath still been tried a holy man.

How if, when I am laid into the tomb,

I wake before the time that Romeo

Come to redeem me? There’s a fearful point.

Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault

To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,

And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?

Or, if I live, is it not very like

The horrible conceit of death and night,

Together with the terror of the place—

As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,

Where for these many hundred years the bones

Of all my buried ancestors are packed;

Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,

Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,

At some hours in the night spirits resort—?

Alack, alack, is it not like that I,

So early waking, what with loathsome smells,

And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,

That living mortals, hearing them, run mad—?

Oh, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,

Environèd 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?

Oh, look! Methinks I see my cousin’s ghost

Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body

Upon a rapier’s point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!

Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here’s drink. I drink to thee.

*She drinks from the vial and falls on her bed, hidden by her bed curtains.*

Questions

Answer the following questions in full sentences in your book.

**1)** What are your first impressions of Juliet having read Act 4 Scene 3? How does she feel?

**2)** Within the first 4 lines Juliet references the temperature. Why? (hint: think about the denotations)

**3)** Juliet starts to question herself, ‘**What if this mixture do not work at all? Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?**’

**a)** Who is she supposed to be marrying in the morning?

**b)** How many rhetorical questions are there in this section? (Hint: count the ?)

**c)** How do you think Juliet is feeling here?

**4)** Who will be in the tomb with Juliet and how does she feel about that?

**5)** In this scene it has been argued that Juliet shows signs of madness. Find **3** quotations (from the original text), which show this and explain them.

For example, *‘****living mortal, hearing them, run mad - ?****’. Juliet states that if she hears the ghosts she will ‘run mad’ which means go insane. Juliet’s preoccupation with life and death is presented in the oxymoron[[1]](#footnote-1) ‘living mortal’ which begins to show how her mind is deteriorating into madness as she is starting to dwell upon the notion of there being a living dead.*

**6)** Using your knowledge of the play, **do you think that Juliet is mad**? To support your answer reference different events which have happened in the play to make her feel this way. (Excellent learners will use quotation from the text to support their answer)

**Possible sentence starters**

By Act 4 Scene 3, I think that Juliet [is/is not] mad…

Earlier in the play…

Following those events,…

Significantly, her father…

It is for the reasons I have discussed above that I think Juliet [is/is not] mad.

1. Oxymoron: a figure of speech in which contradictory terms appear in together: Bitter sweet; pretty ugly [↑](#footnote-ref-1)