

# Romeo and Juliet

## Juliet's Diary



In the play, Juliet tends to share her feelings with the Nurse, who has known Juliet all her life. Juliet is, however, coming to an age when she needs to start making decisions on her own. This is the time when many of us start to keep a diary, where we chronicle the things that have happened to us and where we work through ideas and emotions.

Let's imagine that Juliet is keeping a diary. What do you think her entry for the night after the ball at the Capulets looks like...

The most amazing thing has happened today! My parents were having a ball at our house, and for some strange reason right before they started to talk about me getting married to someone I'd never met before, but I said I was actually still pretty young for that sort of thing, so that's that. Anyway, I met this absolutely gorgeous guy at the party - Romeo he is called. I didn't know who he was then, but the way he spoke to me while dancing was just cool. He really knows how to flirt, we ended up sharing a poem together (and a kiss!) I don't how that happened, really, but it did! Then, guess what, turns out that he is the son of that Montague! Just my luck! I mean, of all people in Verona, I obviously have to fall for the son of my family's worst enemy! ...



Imagine you are Juliet and you are writing a diary entry for the evening before she takes Friar Lawrence's drug. What do you think is going through her head at that moment in the play? Is she afraid? Impatient to see Romeo again when she wakes up?

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Compare your diary entry to Juliet's soliloquy in Act IV, Scene 3:

Juliet

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.  
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.  
*[Juliet lays down a knife.]*  
What if it be a poison which the Friar  
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,  
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonoured,  
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 this 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,  
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,  
Environed with all these hideous fears,  
And madly play with my forefathers' 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?  
O, 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 and falls down on the bed.]*



What does Shakespeare imagine Juliet fears in this moment? Try and identify how this soliloquy is structured:

- Can the soliloquy be broken down into parts?
- Are there any rhetorical devices that help you identify the different thoughts that run through Juliet's head?



How would you perform this soliloquy in terms of its emotions: for example, where in the speech do you think is Juliet most afraid?