Romeo and Juliet

Act IV and Act V Discussion Questions

Act IV

 1. Describe Juliet’s state of mind during her conversation with the friar.

 2. Because the friar prepares a potion contrary to anything known to science, some critics have labeled this a supernatural element in the plot. Is it plausible that the friar should have in his possession a potion capable of making a person appear dead for a set length of time?

 3. How does Shakespeare make the potion at least partly believable for modern audiences?

 4. Point out several instances in which Capulet’s actions have proved to be contrary to his words.

 5. Evaluate Capulet’s character at this point.

 6. What has he accomplished by being so harsh with Juliet?

 7. What attitude does Juliet display toward Lord Capulet upon her return from the friar’s cell?

 8. How does the friar change in his attitude toward Juliet and what does this show about his character?

 9. In scene 3, what are Juliet’s reactions to drinking the potion?

 10. How does this potion scene contrast with the following scene, scene 4?

 11. Why might Shakespeare have created such a contrast?

 12. Why is the friar so anxious to have Juliet carried to the vault?

 13. How might the Capulets have reacted at this point had Friar Laurence revealed the truth instead of continuing the deception?

 14. Compare the speeches of Lord and Lady Capulet in Act IV, scene 5, with their speeches in Act III, scene 5. How does this comparison add to your evaluation of their characters?

Act V

 1. What forebodings of tragedy occur in scene 1?

 2. How might Romeo’s dream be interpreted?

 3. What hope is there that tragedy may be averted even after Romeo buys the potion?

 4. What happens to ruin that hope?

 5. At the end of scene 2, what hope is there that Romeo and Juliet still be saved?

 6. What becomes of that hope?

 7. What one flaw in Romeo’s character is strongly evident in Act V?

 8. Among the characters remaining alive at the end of the play, who is deserving of punishment?

**SAT Vocabulary**

 Act IV:

1. Dirge
2. Inundate
3. Lament
4. Melancholy
5. Pensive
6. Prostration
7. Resolute
8. Starke
9. Supple
10. Treachery

Act V:

1. Cordial
2. Dispatch
3. Engrossed
4. Inauspicious
5. Interred
6. Penury
7. Peruse
8. Presage
9. Rigor
10. Thwart