

What do we learn about Juliet in Acts I and II?

- Juliet is the **only living child** of the **Capulet** household.
- She is **very young** and has been **brought up by her Nurse**, with whom she has a close and trusting relationship. Her **mother is more distant** and **cold** towards her.
- She is asked to consider **marriage to** the wealthy and handsome **Paris**.
- However, **at the feast**, she is instantly **attracted to Romeo**, rather than Paris.
- Her interactions with Romeo at the feast show she is **quick-witted** and **clever**.
- She **falls in love quickly** with Romeo, and when he visits the orchard she seems **determined** and **open** in expressing her feelings for him.
- She is the one who **suggests marriage**.
- Although she is **respectful to her parents**, Juliet **marries Romeo without their knowledge**.



Q Three key questions

1. How is Juliet presented?
2. How does Juliet's relationship with the Nurse compare to her relationship with her mother?
3. How does Juliet react to Romeo when she first meets him?

Answers

1. Juliet is young and innocent but she is also strong-willed and independent.
2. She has a trusting relationship with her Nurse (although this is later betrayed). Her relationship with her mother seems more cold and distant.
3. Juliet is instantly attracted to Romeo at the feast and is determined to marry him.

Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

1. On meeting Paris: **'I'll look to like, if looking liking move'** (I.3.98)
2. At the feast with Romeo: **'You kiss by th' book'** (I.5.109)
3. On discovering Romeo is a Montague: **'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;/Thou art thyself, though not a Montague'** (II.2.38–9)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

When she first meets Paris, Juliet appears willing to obey her parents

How does Shakespeare present fate and free will?

- In the Prologue, the Chorus announces that the lovers are '**star-crossed**' and bound by fate.
- The lovers use language linked to the **stars** and the **heavens** – a **symbol of fate**.
- Juliet's strong sense of **free will** leads her to **arrange her own marriage** and **defy her father's** authority.
- Romeo feels he has been **tricked by fate** when he kills Tybalt.
- Juliet has a **premonition** of Romeo's death when he leaves after their wedding night.
- Benvolio suggests that attending the feast will help Romeo forget Rosaline. His words almost **predict** Romeo's meeting with Juliet.
- Tybalt **tempts fate** when he suggests that Romeo will eventually be made to pay for his intrusion at the Capulet feast.
- Although he hopes that the marriage will lead to **reconciliation** between the households, Friar Lawrence fears that it is **ill-fated**.



Q Three key questions

1. How does the Prologue establish the theme of fate?
2. How do Romeo and Juliet act out of free will?
3. Which symbol of fate are Romeo and Juliet repeatedly linked with?

A Answers

1. In the Prologue, the Chorus tells us that the deaths of Romeo and Juliet are fated.
2. Romeo and Juliet act on free will by marrying in secret, despite their parents' wishes. In doing so, they challenge the conventions of Elizabethan society.
3. Much of the language that Romeo and Juliet use to describe their love is connected to the workings of the stars and the heavens.

Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

1. Initial message about fate: **'From forth the fatal loins of these two foes/A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life'** (Prologue.5–6)
2. Juliet, as Romeo leaves her at daybreak: **'Methinks I see thee now, thou art low,/As one dead in the bottom of a tomb'** (III.5.55–6)
3. Romeo, learning of Juliet's death: **'I defy you, stars!'** (V.1.24)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

At the end of the play, Romeo claims to have free will