

Applied Practice

Shakespeare's Tragedies

RESOURCE GUIDE

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APPLIED PRACTICE
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Shakespeare's Tragedies
Pre-AP*/AP* Version

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Practice 1

Romeo and Juliet, Act II, scene ii

Background:

The play opens when the servants of the Montagues and the servants of the Capulets meet in the street. Because the two families have long been enemies, their servants trade insults and begin to brawl. Tybalt, a Capulet, and Benvolio, a Montague, arrive and, after insulting each other, prepare to fight. The elder Montague and the elder Capulet enter and are determined to join the fray, despite the protests of their wives. The fighting is finally halted when Prince Escalus arrives and threatens them all with death if they do not stop the senseless violence.

After everyone else exits, Lord and Lady Montague ask Benvolio if he has seen his cousin, Romeo. Lord Montague says that lately Romeo has been sad, staying alone in his room and refusing to reveal what is bothering him. Benvolio vows to discover the cause of Romeo's sadness. When he meets Romeo, he persuades his cousin to reveal that his distress is due to his unrequited love for the beautiful Rosaline. She has vowed to remain a maiden, and Romeo cannot believe that any other woman can match her beauty and thus cure him of his devotion to her.

Meanwhile, Lord Capulet is being asked for his daughter's hand in marriage. Paris, a handsome gentleman, wants to marry Juliet. Capulet reminds him that Juliet is not yet fourteen years old, but Paris argues that many young girls of that age are married. Capulet agrees that Paris can marry Juliet but invites him to a ball he is giving that evening and encourages him to see if some other woman might catch his fancy.

Capulet's servant is sent to invite the guests, but he is unable to read the guests' names. Spying two gentlemen, Benvolio and Romeo, he asks for their assistance in reading the invitation. Having learned of the ball, and the fact that Rosaline is invited, Benvolio urges Romeo to accompany him to the ball in disguise so that Romeo can see how Rosaline's beauty compares to that of other young ladies.

Lady Capulet informs Juliet of Paris's intention to marry her, and Juliet replies that she will look for him at the ball and see if she would find him suitable for a husband.

Benvolio and Romeo arrive at the ball wearing masks, but Tybalt recognizes Romeo's voice and declares that he will kill him. Lord Capulet forbids this, saying that Romeo has a good reputation and is a guest in his home. Tybalt grudgingly agrees not to start trouble but is determined to fight Romeo next time they meet.

Romeo spies Juliet across the dance floor and suddenly declares that he has never seen beauty before this time. Romeo approaches Juliet, and they engage in flirtatious wordplay and exchange a couple of kisses before the Nurse arrives and tells Juliet she is wanted by her mother. When Juliet leaves, Romeo asks the Nurse who Juliet's mother is, and the Nurse informs him that she is Lady Capulet. Horrified, Romeo tells Benvolio they must leave. Juliet returns and asks the Nurse who Romeo is. When she learns that he is a Montague, she curses her fate but hides her feelings from the Nurse.

Benvolio and Mercutio have lost sight of Romeo, who has scaled the wall of the Capulets' orchard. They give up trying to coax him to join them and turn to go home, leaving Romeo beneath Juliet's window.

Performance:

The following link and QR Code will direct you to a Royal Shakespeare Company performance of the Act II balcony scene.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHoapLO6Zd8>



Read the following passage from Act II, scene ii of *Romeo and Juliet* carefully before you choose your answers.

Enter Juliet above at her window.

- Rom.* But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
(5) That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
and none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
(10) O that she knew she were!
She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?
Her eye discourses, I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks.
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
(15) Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
(20) Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!
(25) *Jul.* Ay me!
Rom. She speaks!
O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
As is a winged messenger of heaven
(30) Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him,
When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air.
Jul. O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
(35) Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
Rom. [*Aside.*] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?
Jul. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
(40) Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot,
Nor arm nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
(45) By any other word would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
(50) Take all myself.

Free-Response Question

(Suggested time—40 minutes)

In Act II, scene iv of *King Lear*, Lear argues that for a person to content oneself strictly with what one needs is tantamount to reducing a human to the level of a beast. In a well-organized essay, defend, challenge, or qualify the validity of Lear's assertion. Use evidence from your reading, observation, and/or experience to support your position.

ANSWER EXPLANATIONS
PRACTICE 6

1. **(B) *non sequitur*.** The Doctor’s question was “when did Lady Macbeth last sleepwalk?” The Gentlewoman’s “answer” does not follow from his question since it focuses on the details of the sleepwalking rather than on when the sleepwalking last occurred.
2. **(A) *circumspect*.** The Gentlewoman is showing prudent caution when she refuses to reveal what incriminating words she may have heard from Lady Macbeth. She has “no witness to confirm [her] speech.” It would be foolhardy to place herself in a circumstance in which either her word or the queen’s must be credited.
3. **(E) *Courage versus prudence*.** Courage and prudence are not contrasted in this passage. The Gentlewoman demonstrates prudence in what she will say to the Doctor, but courage is not addressed. The Doctor is “amaz’d” by what he witnesses and declares that this case is unlike any he has dealt with before (“This disease is beyond my practice”). Lady Macbeth herself expresses surprise that “the old man” has “so much blood in him” and that the spot she tries to wash away remains on her hands. The Doctor wants the Gentlewoman to reveal what Lady Macbeth has said in her sleep, but the Gentlewoman refuses because there was “no witness to confirm” what she has heard. Once Lady Macbeth does speak, the Doctor remarks to the Gentlewoman “you have known what you should not.” It seems as though Lady Macbeth has spoken of that which only “heaven” should know. The Doctor concludes that the “secrets” of “infected minds” call for a priest (“the divine”) rather than a physician. The contrast between cleanliness and stains represents the impossibility of Lady Macbeth’s removing her guilt, and her insistence upon having a candle burning all night indicates her fear of the darkness, again suggesting guilt.
4. **(C) *representation of Lady Macbeth herself*.** Throughout the passage, Lady Macbeth laments the fact that her “hands” will never be clean. Her hands are clearly standing for herself. She knows that she herself is guilty of the various murders. Only in Duncan’s murder were her literal hands involved, but she feels guilty for the murders of Macduff’s wife and Banquo.
5. **(C) *in exchange for*.** The Gentlewoman, observing Lady Macbeth’s torment, remarks that she herself would not suffer such torment even in exchange for being Queen of Scotland.
6. **(B) *it is possible for sleepwalking to mean nothing sinister*.** The Doctor suggests that he does not usually deal with sleepwalking but says he has known of innocent people, those “who have died holily in their beds,” who were sleepwalkers. Therefore, sleepwalking in itself does not necessarily signify anything sinister.