

# ASM TUITION ACADEMY

## ROMEO AND JULIET

### EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS

#### **The Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* – Character Analysis**

The Nurse is one of the most important supporting characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. As Juliet's confidante and caretaker, she plays a pivotal role in the young lover's life, acting as a mother figure and a facilitator of Juliet's relationship with Romeo. Her earthy humor, pragmatism, and emotional closeness to Juliet make her one of the most memorable and relatable characters in the play.

#### **Character Traits and Analysis**

1. **Maternal Figure:**

- The Nurse is more than just a servant in the Capulet household; she is like a mother to Juliet. She has cared for Juliet since infancy, breastfed her, and continues to watch over her closely. This maternal connection is seen in the way she calls Juliet "*What, lamb! What, ladybird!*" (Act 1, Scene 3), affectionate terms that signify their deep bond.

2. **Loyal and Protective:**

- The Nurse is fiercely loyal to Juliet and willing to go to great lengths to ensure her happiness. She acts as a go-between for Romeo and Juliet, helping them arrange their secret marriage and later bringing messages between the two. Her loyalty is evident in her eagerness to see Juliet happy and in love.
- **Key Quote:** "*Hie you to church; I must another way, To fetch a ladder, by the which your love Must climb a bird's nest soon when it is dark.*" (Act 2, Scene 5)
- **Analysis:** The Nurse's words highlight her active role in facilitating the couple's marriage. She not only supports the union but also physically aids in bringing the lovers together.

3. **Bawdy and Humorous:**

- The Nurse's coarse humor and bawdy language provide comic relief throughout the play, making her a lively and engaging character. Her playful personality is seen in the way she teases Juliet about Romeo's intentions and uses sexual innuendos.
- **Key Quote:** "*I am the drudge, and toil in your delight, But you shall bear the burden soon at night.*" (Act 2, Scene 5)
- **Analysis:** The Nurse's crude joke about Juliet's wedding night exemplifies her earthy humour. While her words may seem inappropriate, they reflect the Nurse's candid nature and closeness to Juliet, speaking to her as one might speak to a peer rather than a young lady of nobility.

4. **Pragmatic and Realistic:**

- Despite her initial support for Romeo and Juliet's relationship, the Nurse reveals her pragmatic and realistic nature after Tybalt's death. When Capulet

demands that Juliet marry Paris, the Nurse advises Juliet to forget Romeo and marry Paris instead, showing her concern for Juliet's welfare in a practical sense.

- **Key Quote:** *"I think it best you married with the County. O, he's a lovely gentleman!"* (Act 3, Scene 5)
- **Analysis:** This sudden shift in the Nurse's attitude illustrates her pragmatic view of love and life. She knows that the match with Paris would be socially advantageous and secure Juliet's future, suggesting she values stability over romantic ideals.

#### 5. **Betrayal and Conflict:**

- The Nurse's change of heart regarding Juliet's marriage to Paris causes Juliet to feel betrayed, which creates tension between them. The Nurse's pragmatic advice to marry Paris, while meant to protect Juliet, ultimately alienates Juliet from her.
- **Key Quote:** *"Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!"* (Act 3, Scene 5)
- **Analysis:** Juliet's reaction to the Nurse's suggestion reveals the depth of her disappointment. Juliet views the Nurse's advice as a betrayal of her love and trust, severing their once unbreakable bond.

### **Role in Juliet's Life**

#### 1. **Mother Figure:**

- Juliet's biological mother, Lady Capulet, is distant and formal, leaving the Nurse to fulfill the maternal role in Juliet's life. The Nurse has cared for Juliet since infancy and continues to be her confidante, making her more influential than Lady Capulet.

#### 2. **Confidante and Messenger:**

- The Nurse plays a crucial role in Juliet's secret relationship with Romeo. She acts as a go-between, relaying messages, and even helping Juliet meet Romeo in secret. Her involvement allows the young couple's relationship to flourish, though it also entangles her in the tragic events that unfold.

#### 3. **Emotional Support:**

- The Nurse provides emotional support for Juliet in a way that no other character does. She understands Juliet's emotions, comforts her, and attempts to guide her through difficult situations, though her advice may not always align with Juliet's desires.

### **Themes Related to the Nurse**

#### 1. **Love and Loyalty:**

- The Nurse's loyalty to Juliet is unwavering until it conflicts with what she perceives to be Juliet's best interest. Her love for Juliet transcends social boundaries, but her pragmatic approach to love ultimately causes a rift between them.

#### 2. **Parental Authority vs. Individual Desires:**

- The Nurse's actions highlight the tension between parental authority and Juliet's personal desires. She initially helps Juliet act against her parents' wishes but later aligns herself with them, emphasizing the societal expectation for women to obey their parents.

#### 3. **Betrayal:**

- When the Nurse advises Juliet to marry Paris, it is seen as a betrayal by Juliet. This moment underscores the theme of betrayal, as someone whom Juliet trusted completely abandons her ideals for practical reasons.
4. **Comic Relief and Social Commentary:**
- The Nurse's bawdy humour and lively personality provide comic relief in an otherwise tragic play. Her commentary on love and marriage, though humorous, also reflects the attitudes and societal norms of the time, making her an instrument of social commentary.

## **Conclusion**

The Nurse is a multifaceted character who serves as a mother figure, confidante, and comic relief in *Romeo and Juliet*. Her role in the play is crucial, as she helps facilitate the young lovers' relationship and provides insight into the themes of love, loyalty, and societal expectations. However, her pragmatic advice in the face of adversity reveals the limitations of her support for Juliet and ultimately leads to a tragic rift between them.

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