Act 2 Scene 1 Discussion Point and Questions

*Scene:* *A lane by the wall of Capulet’s orchard – Later in the evening of the party, Romeo returns alone to the Capulet home, hoping for another glimpse of Juliet. He climbs the wall and hides outside, in the orchard. Meanwhile, Benvolio and Mercutio come looking for him, but he remains hidden behind the wall. Mercutio makes fun of Romeo and his lovesick condition. Keep in mind that Mercutio and Benvolio think Romeo is still in love with Rosaline, since they know nothing about his meeting with Juliet.*

1. Have you ever felt like avoiding your friends? Why does Romeo want to avoid Mercutio and Benvolio?
   1. He probably doesn't want to face their questions, their teasing, and probably their attempts to keep him from seeing Juliet again.
2. Is it wise for him to hide?
   1. Yeah, because Mercutio and Benvolio will probably try to keep him from Juliet.
   2. No, because Romeo is acting on a moment's passion and his friends will help him look at the situation more realistically.
3. Benvolio and Mercutio speak about Romeo's "blind" love. How does Romeo's description of Juliet in the beginning of Scene 2 suggest that they might be right?
   1. So much exaggeration in his description...he thinks she is extremely beautiful and is not seeing her realistically. He is enraptured by Juliet's beauty that he idealizes her.

Act 2 Scene 2 Discussion Points and Questions

*Scene: Capulet’s orchard – The following is one of the most famous scenes in all literature. The speeches contain some of the most beautiful poetry Shakespeare ever wrote. Juliet appears on the balcony outside her room. She cannot see Romeo, who stands in the garden just below. At the beginning of the scene, both characters are speaking private thoughts to themselves. Romeo, however, can hear Juliet as she expresses her love for him despite his family name. Eventually, he speaks directly to her, and they declare their love for each other. Just before dawn Romeo leaves to make plans for their wedding.*

1. How strongly do you identify with your family name? Would you give it up so easily for love as Romeo and Juliet are so willing?
   1. Yes, in marriage...or if it would achieve something important.
   2. No, it is too important and is party of my identity
2. How do Romeo and Juliet feel about their names?
   1. They are willing to give them up for each other; a name means nothing in reality (a rose is still looks like a rose and smells like a rose, even if we don't call it a rose)
3. Do you think that changing their names would even help?
   1. Probably not. The Capulets can identify Romeo by the way he looks; however, the fact that they want to get rid of their names for each other shows that they are above their families' feud and want to separate themselves from it.
4. How can you tell that Romeo is driven by his passions and is "all in."
   1. All of his exaggerations...ready to go to the ends of the earth for Juliet
5. How can you tell that Juliet seems more uneasy about everything?
   1. Everything is happening so quickly. She is afraid that a love that begins so suddenly will disappear too soon (like lightning).
6. Speech: Love that gets intense very quickly, end just as quickly (almost always); therefore, we should spend time cultivating love...building friendship and care for each other, getting to know each other, and loving more each day, etc.)
7. Juliet makes a plan that if Romeo wants to marry her, she will send a messenger so Romeo can tell the messenger where and when Juliet should meet him. Do you think the wedding plans will happen? Why or why not?
8. Do you think it's wise for them to marry without parental knowledge or consent?
   1. Yes, their parents would forbid it. Forgiveness over permission (maybe this will end the fight)
   2. No, their parents should be there or should at least approve, otherwise it will make their lives really hard (since they are so young).

Act 2 Scene 3 Discussion Points and Questions

*Scene: Friar Laurence’s cell in the monastery – Romeo goes from Capulet’s garden to the monastery where Friar Laurence lives. The friar knows Romeo well and often gives him advice. As the scene begins, Friar Laurence is gathering herbs in the early morning. He talks of good and bad uses for herbs. Keep this in mind, since Friar Laurence’s skill at mixing herbs becomes important later in the play. Romeo tells the friar that he loves Juliet and wants to marry her. The friar is amazed that Romeo has forgotten about Rosaline so easily and suggests that Romeo might be acting in haste. Eventually, however, he agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet, hoping that the marriage will end the feud between their families.*

**Background: Friar Lawrence is a Fraciscan friar, a member of a Roman Catholic religious order of men, founded by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209. Friars lived without material possessions and lived in small rooms or cells, located in monasteries. His presence in the play is controversial. In 1535, after the spread of Reformation ideas in England, monks and friars were banned. By the 1590s, Roman Catholic priests were thought to be agents of the Spanish and risked execution for treason if they practiced their religion on English soil. So Friar Lawrence practices a secular occupation (Herbalism) in public, while he administers the Catholic sacraments in private.**

**Herbalism: Members of religious orders (like Friar Lawrence) continued to study ancient Greek writings on Herbalism and cultivated herbal gardens. Information about herbal medicines and cures spread with the invention of the printing press (books known as "herbals"), which continues to be used today. This information plays a key role in the play, as Friar Lawrence practices this subject.**

1. Who is someone you can go to when you need to talk? Why do you supposed Friar Lawrence is this person for Romeo?
   1. He is caring and wise. He is also perceptive (he noticed Romeo hasn't slept). He is also honest and encourages Romeo to be as well. The friar is respected and trusted by Romeo.
2. How does Friar Lawrence react to Romeo's love of Juliet? Why do you suppose he reacted that way?
   1. He is surprised that Romeo has quickly forgotten his former love, Rosaline, so he wants to make sure this love is not a function of attraction, but rather a function of real love.
3. Why does Friar Lawrence agree to help Romeo?
   1. He thinks the marriage will help end the feud between the Capulets and Montagues.
4. By performing the marriage of Romeo and Juliet, what is Friar Lawrence's risk?
   1. Angering both powerful families. There could be greater violence instead of peace (and some of that violence may be directed at him)