Act 3 Scene 1 Discussion Point and Questions

*Scene: A public place – Act Two ends with the joyful Romeo and Juliet secretly married. Their happiness, however, is about to end abruptly. In this scene, Mercutio, Benvolio, and Romeo meet Tybalt on the street. Tybalt insults Romeo, but Romeo, who has just returned from his wedding, remains calm. Mercutio, on the other hand, is furious with Tybalt, and they begin to fight. As Romeo tries to separate them, Tybalt stabs Mercutio, who later dies. Romeo then challenges Tybalt, kills him, and flees. The prince arrives and demands an explanation. He announces that Romeo will be killed if he does not leave Verona immediately.*

**Background: Elizabethans respected duels as a way to defend one's honor, to prove one's innocence, to counter an injury or insult, or to defend some other personal claim. They believed justice could be determined by the outcome of a duel and that rejecting a challenge to a duel was shameful. Romeo could shame his family and friends if he rejects Tybalt's challenge, so that's probably why Mercutio rises to the occasion.**

1. Why doesn't Romeo want to fight Tybalt?
   1. He married Juliet, Tybalt's cousin. Now they are related, so he doesn't want conflict.
2. Analyze the line, "A plague o' both your houses!" Who says it and why? What might it foreshadow?
   1. Mercutio says it when he knows he's about to die from the stab wound. This curse foreshadows disaster for the two fighting families.
3. Why Tybalt and Mercutio fight?
   1. Tybalt insults Romeo, who refuses to fight.
4. Do you think that Tybalt intended to fight and kill Mercutio?
   1. No. Mercutio challenged Tybalt and drew his weapon, forcing Tybalt to have to defend himself.
   2. Yes. Tybalt wanted to hurt someone.
5. Was the fight between Mercutio and Tybalt fair?
   1. No, because Mercutio was held back by Romeo. Mercutio put his weapon down, and that's when Tybalt struck.
6. What is Romeo's justification for now fighting Tybalt?
   1. He's pissed that his best friend was killed. Mercutio's soul is waiting for the soul of Tybalt or Romeo—whoever is killed in the fight—to accompany him
7. Why does Lady Capulet think Benvolio is lying?
   1. He's a Montague so he's biased and wouldn't want to make Romeo look bad.
8. How is the theme of love vs. Hate present in this scene?
   1. Mercutio acting out of love for his friend
   2. Romeo tried to not fight Tybalt
   3. Tybalt's hate for the Montagues caused the death of Mercutio
   4. Romeo's love for Mercutio caused the death of Tybalt
   5. Prince decides banishment for Romeo because of his love for his relative, Mercutio.

Act 3 Scene 2 Discussion Points and Questions

*Scene: Capulet’s orchard. The scene begins with Juliet impatiently waiting for night to come so that Romeo can climb to her bedroom on the rope ladder. Suddenly the nurse enters with the terrible news of Tybalt’s death and Romeo’s banishment. Juliet mourns for the loss of her cousin and her husband and threatens to kill herself. To calm her, the nurse promises to find Romeo and bring him to Juliet before he leaves Verona.*

1. How is Juliet's belief that her husband is dead an example of dramatic irony?
   1. Although he is not yet dead, he will be. Juliet mistakenly thinks he is dead when the audience knows he is not.
2. How do you know Juliet's nature for love?
   1. Her love for Romeo is immature because she almost fell out of love with Romeo as fast as she fell in love. Grief can overpower love in times of crisis.
3. What internal conflict does Juliet face in this scene?
   1. Her love killed her cousin, whom she also loves. Should her loyalty lie with her husband or her family? That's her internal conflict.
4. Do you find Juliet's reaction to Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment justified?
   1. She's experiencing shock and grief and she's really young.
5. At the end of Scene 2, what decision did Juliet make about her loyalty? How does her decision threaten her relationship with her nurse?
   1. By this point, Juliet has decided to be loyal to her husband, even though they have been married for only a few hours. Nurse mourned Tybalt and cursed Romeo, so if she doesn't support Romeo, she will be at odds with Juliet, therefore, losing her trust.
6. How does Romeo's love for Juliet make him ungrateful for the prince's mercy?
   1. Romeo has such great love for Juliet that any separation from her feels like a death sentence. The prince's decision will separate him from Juliet.

Act 3 Scene 3 Discussion Points and Questions

*Scene: Friar Laurence’s cell. Friar Laurence tells Romeo of his banishment, and Romeo collapses in grief. When he learns from the nurse that Juliet, too, is in despair, he threatens to stab himself. The friar reacts by suggesting a plan. Romeo is to spend a few hours with Juliet and then escape to Mantua. While he is away, the friar will announce the wedding and try to get a pardon from the prince.*

1. Does Friar Lawrence successfully calm down Romeo? How?
   1. Attempts to console him with philosophy, so Romeo can think rationally about his situation
2. Why doesn't Romeo want to hear what Friar has to say to console him?
   1. Romeo thinks Friar doesn't understand because he's never been through this.
3. According to Friar Lawrence, why should Romeo's marriage—his commitment to a lifelong love—prevent him from killing himself?
   1. He promised to cherish his love for Juliet. Friar says that Romeo should not kill that love through taking his life. If he kills himself, he will destroy Juliet too.
4. What's the plan to resolve their dilemma?
   1. Romeo will visit Juliet and then leave Verona in disguise. While Romeo is in Mantua, Friar will announce the marriage between Romeo and Juliet, reconcile their families, and try to persuade the prince to reverse the banishment and allow Romeo to return.