Act 5 Scene 1 Discussion Point and Questions

*Scene: A street in Mantua. Balthasar, Romeo’s servant, comes from Verona to tell him that Juliet is dead and lies in the Capulets’ tomb. Since Romeo has not yet received any word from the friar, he believes Balthasar. He immediately decides to return to Verona in order to die next to Juliet. He sends Balthasar away and sets out to find a pharmacist who will sell him poison.*

**Background: Apothecaries in Shakespeare's time were the lowest level of medical practitioners (below physicians and surgeons). The apothecary in the story is beset by poverty, but not dishonesty. His shop is shabby but contains legitimate ingredients for death.**

1. What part of Romeo's seemingly happy dream foreshadows the tragic events to come?
   1. When Juliet kisses Romeo's corpse
2. What information has Balthazar brought? How does he know it? Why does he bring the news to him?
   1. That Juliet is dead; he saw her being put in the tomb; Romeo told him to keep him updated on her in Verona.
3. Does Romeo carefully consider his options or plunge immediately into action? What could have he done differently?
   1. He is going to kill himself where Juliet is buried. He plunges into action without considering options (talking to Friar Lawrence, etc.)
4. Have you ever been faced with a difficult choice? How does that help you understand the choice the friar had to make?
   1. Regarding his poverty and his life
5. Which of the two has a greater fear of death?
   1. The apothecary...he considers the death penalty for selling Romeo the poison. Romeo doesn't fear death...he is determined to buy the poison

Act 5 Scene 2 Discussion Points and Questions

*Scene: Friar Laurence’s cell in Verona. Friar Laurence’s messenger arrives, saying that he was unable to deliver the letter to Romeo. Friar Laurence, his plans ruined, rushes to the Capulet vault before Juliet awakes. He intends to hide her in his room until Romeo can come to take her away*

**Background: The streets of this time were basically open sewers as well as communal garbage dumps and were basically responsible for breeding the rats whose infected fleas spread the "Black Death" (the Plague). While no one understood the contagious nature, a solution was to board up houses containing infected residents and quarantine the inhabitants.**

1. What is the problem and solution in scene 2?
   1. Friar Lawrence's message has not reached Romeo.
2. What does Friar Lawrence do?
   1. Rushes to the Capulet vault so he can get and hide Juliet until Romeo comes.
3. What do we learn about Friar's new plan in this soliloquy at the end of scene 2? Why is it essential to reach Juliet before Romeo does?
   1. He will greet Juliet when she awakes and will hide her in his cell until Romeo arrives. Romeo believes that she is really dead, so if Romeo reaches her first, he may go mad.

Act 5 Scene 3 Discussion Points and Questions

*Scene: The cemetery that contains the Capulets’ tomb. In the dark of night Paris comes to the cemetery to put flowers on Juliet’s grave. At the same time Romeo arrives, and Paris hides. Paris assumes that Romeo is going to harm the bodies. He challenges Romeo, they fight, and Romeo kills Paris. When Romeo recognizes the dead Paris, he lays his body inside the tomb as Paris requested. Romeo declares his love for Juliet, drinks the poison, and dies. Shortly after, Friar Laurence arrives and discovers both bodies. When Juliet wakes up, the friar urges her to leave with him before the guard comes. Juliet refuses, and when the friar leaves, she kills herself with Romeo’s dagger. The guards and the prince arrive, followed by the Capulets and Lord Montague, whose wife has just died of grief because of Romeo’s exile. Friar Laurence explains what has happened. Capulet and Montague finally end their feud and promise to erect statues honoring Romeo and Juliet.*

1. How does Paris indicate that he has love for Juliet?
   1. He brought flowers to the tomb and promised to continue to do so.
2. Why does Romeo go into the tomb?
   1. He wants to see Juliet's face and wants to take a ring from her finger (but really to kill himself with the poison and die besides her body)
3. Who is hiding in the cemetery and why?
   1. Paris's page and Balthazar. They are worried for their "masters."
4. Do you think Romeo is at fault or no for fighting Paris? Why or why not?
   1. Romeo's impulsiveness and passion are his strongest traits. He acts without thinking about consequences or alternatives. He fights Paris because he's acting on his passion and impulsiveness. Or he's not at fault because Paris provokes him (but he should have explained to Paris why he was there).
5. What conditions might weaken Romeo's judgement?
   1. Late hour, worry, grief, etc.
6. What does Romeo hope to accomplish by killing himself?
   1. Repay Tybalt for murdering him and can protect Juliet from becoming "death's lover."
7. What does Romeo do after killing Paris?
   1. He lays him in the Capulet tomb as he wished.
8. Does Romeo really prove his love for Juliet by drinking the poison?
   1. Not being able to live without her shows his love. But killing himself is an act of despair. He could've looked beyond this moment of grief to honor Juliet by ending the feud between the families.
9. So going back to the prologue, why were these two "star-crossed" or "unlucky" lovers?
   1. They could've actually been together if Romeo hadn't been so impulsive.
10. Why did Friar Lawrence leave Juliet in the cell so quickly?
    1. He broke the law by helping Romeo return from exile. Someone was coming and he was afraid of being implicated for what happened. He could've been held responsible for Paris's death. He's also responsible for the secret marriage and pretend death of Juliet, so he will probably be severely punished.
11. Do you think Friar was a positive or negative presence for Romeo and Juliet?
12. What does Friar propose to do with Juliet before she kills herself?
    1. Send her to a convent of nuns to be protected (her father's reaction might be too severe, so he was trying to protect her)
13. Prince interprets the death scene as one of hate. How is he wrong?
    1. Romeo killed Paris to be with his beloved, Juliet. He killed himself rather than live without Juliet's love. And Juliet killed herself rather than live without Romeo's love.
14. Nurse and Benvolio are each important to Juliet and Romeo. Why do you think Shakespeare left them out of tis scene?
15. How does the Prince know that Friar Lawrence is telling the truth about the explanation of the deaths?
    1. Romeo's letter that he gave to Balthazar to give to his father explained it. Plus, he's objective.
16. Does Friar Lawrence think he did anything wrong? Should he think so?
    1. Yes, but also believes his actions are excusable. Since the lovers followed his plans, he is more culpable than he allows in his speech.
17. On what does the prince blame all the deaths? What theme might this suggest?
    1. The duel between the families. Theme might be that hatred hurts the person who hates as well as the person who is hated (or that hatred will be punished by the destruction of joy).
18. Why does the prince dismiss the Friar's acceptance of blame?
    1. He is a holy man, so his character is above reproach.
19. What will Montague and Capulet do to honor the other's child?
    1. Build a stature
20. What happens as a result of Romeo and Juliet's death?
    1. The families make peace