

*ESSENTIAL POINTS TO REVISE ON ACT 1 SCENE 5*

Romeo has not been invited to the ball and should not really be there. He has been persuaded to go by his friends, and only agrees because he knows Rosaline is going to be there.

The servants are very busy at the beginning of the scene. Sampson shows this by asking lots of questions at the beginning and then does not seem to have time to wait for answers.

The atmosphere is initially happy: it should be, it is a party!

Capulet greets his guests and his repetition of the word “welcome” shows us how cheerful he is, playing the welcoming host.

The audience is aware straight away that Romeo is transfixed by Juliet because his first line is, “What lady’s that?” He then goes on to comment in romantic language, how she is the most beautiful person he has ever beheld. She literally dazzles him like a bright jewel against dark skin.

The audience, however, realises there is underlying tension in the scene, as Tybalt spots Romeo and demands the servant, “Fetch me my rapier.” His violent initial reaction reflects his quick temper and hints that he is unlikely to forget the intrusion.

Tybalt refers to Romeo as a “villain” and “slave” which shows the audience how much he abhors Romeo.

The audience sees the control Capulet exerts over his relatives and he expects to be obeyed (see first page). The audience is not surprised late on in the play when Capulet reacts so angrily to Juliet’s refusal to marry Paris.

Romeo and Juliet’s first speech together is in sonnet form (14 lines of poetry), traditionally used for writing love poetry. Their speech is romantic and lyrical. They use religious images, such as “pilgrims”, “palmer”, “prayers”, which reflects the love they feel is not superficial but serious, deep and strong.

Both Romeo and Juliet are disappointed, rather than just disappointed, to learn the name of the other. They both realise the seriousness of loving the enemy, but it is further evidence of the strength of their love that neither mentions not loving the other because of their family.

Juliet prophesies the future when she despairingly mutters, “My grave is like to be my wedding bed.”