Daily Bard

QUOTATION SHEET

Romeo and Juliet: key quotes and analysis

The 10 Romeo and Juliet quotations worth knowing by heart, each with a plain-English reading, an analysis of its language, space for your notes, and a fill-the-gap test.



How to use this sheet

These are the 10 key quotations from the **Romeo and Juliet study guide**, set out for revision. Part one gives each quotation with a plain-English reading, a short analysis of what the language is doing, and space for your own notes. Part two prints them again with a word missing from each line, so that you can test yourself.

- [ ] Read the quotation aloud twice. Sound helps memory more than staring does.
- [ ] In the note space, name one method (a device, a word choice, a feature of the verse) and the effect it has.
- [ ] Add one link: to a theme, to another moment in the text, or to a point of context.
- [ ] A day later, cover part one and complete part two from memory.

Part one: the quotations

> From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
> A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
>
> CHORUS · PROLOGUE · LINES 5-6

Plain English: From these two enemy families come two lovers whom the stars oppose.

The Prologue is a sonnet, a love form used to announce deaths. The alliteration of "forth the fatal" binds birth to doom, and "take their life" is a pun: they are born from their parents and they kill themselves. Knowing the end, the audience watches every hopeful moment with dramatic irony.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
> O anything of nothing first create!
>
> ROMEO · ACT 1, SCENE 1 · 1.1.181-182

Plain English: Love is a fight and hatred is a passion; everything is made out of nothing.

A string of oxymorons (contradictory terms yoked together) marks Romeo as the conventional Petrarchan lover, more in love with the pose than with Rosaline. Yet the lines are spoken as he surveys the brawl, so the clichés are accidentally accurate: in Verona love and hate really are tangled.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> My only love sprung from my only hate!
> Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
>
> JULIET · ACT 1, SCENE 5 · 1.5.152-153

Plain English: The one man I love is the son of the one family I hate; I saw him before I knew who he was.

Antithesis (balanced opposites) organises both lines: love and hate, early and late, unknown and known. The rhyming couplet makes the discovery sound like a verdict. Juliet's first response to love is to see its danger, which sets her apart from Romeo at once.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
> It is the East, and Juliet is the sun.
>
> ROMEO · ACT 2, SCENE 2 · 2.2.2-3

Plain English: Quiet: what is that light at the window? It is the dawn, and Juliet is the sun.

The metaphor makes Juliet the source of light and life, lifting her above the pale, chaste moon Romeo associated with Rosaline. The regular iambic pentameter sounds like wonder slowing into certainty. Our essay on **"But soft, what light"** follows the image through the scene.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> What's in a name? That which we call a rose
> By any other word would smell as sweet.
>
> JULIET · ACT 2, SCENE 2 · 2.2.46-47

Plain English: A name is only a label; a rose would smell the same whatever we called it.

Juliet reasons like a philosopher: names are arbitrary, so "Montague" should not matter. The tragedy proves her wrong, because in Verona a name can get you killed. Quote this to show her intelligence and her innocence together. See **"What's in a name?"** for the full argument.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep. The more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are infinite.
>
> JULIET · ACT 2, SCENE 2 · 2.2.140-142

Plain English: My generosity and my love are as limitless as the sea; giving them only increases them.

The simile replaces the Petrarchan economy of scarcity, where the lady withholds, with one of abundance. The paradox that giving creates more is the play's best definition of mutual love, and it is spoken by the woman, plainly, in monosyllables.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> These violent delights have violent ends
> And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
> Which, as they kiss, consume.
>
> FRIAR LAWRENCE · ACT 2, SCENE 6 · 2.6.9-11

Plain English: Intense pleasures end as intensely as they begin, like fire meeting gunpowder.

The repeated "violent" ties passion to destruction, and the simile turns a kiss into an explosion. This is foreshadowing, spoken minutes before the wedding by the man conducting it, so it also exposes the Friar: he sees the danger and proceeds.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> A plague o' both your houses!
>
> MERCUTIO · ACT 3, SCENE 1 · 3.1.103-104

Plain English: A curse on both your families.

Mercutio repeats the curse as he dies, and he dies in prose, joking about being "a grave man". He belongs to neither house, so his judgement has authority: the feud is the guilty party. The word "plague" becomes literal in Act 5, when quarantine stops the letter.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!
> I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,
> Or never after look me in the face.
>
> CAPULET · ACT 3, SCENE 5 · 3.5.166-168

Plain English: Marry Paris on Thursday, you worthless girl, or I disown you.

Insults that reduce Juliet to goods, blunt imperatives and a flat ultimatum reveal patriarchal power stripped of affection. Compare the gentle father of Act 1, Scene 2. The contrast is the point: his love was conditional on obedience.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

> Then I deny you, stars!
>
> ROMEO · ACT 5, SCENE 1 · 5.1.25

Plain English: Then I reject you, fate.

Five monosyllables after the news of Juliet's death. Romeo believes he is rebelling against destiny, yet by rushing to the tomb he completes exactly what the Prologue foretold. Many editions print "defy"; the Folger text used here reads "deny". Either way the irony holds.

Your notes:

Links to: _____

Part two: test yourself

Fill each gap from memory, then check against part one. Mark the ones you missed and come back to them tomorrow.

> From _____ the fatal loins of these two foes
> A pair of star-_____ lovers take their life;
>
> CHORUS · PROLOGUE

> Why then, O _____ love, O loving hate,
> O _____ of nothing first create!
>
> ROMEO · ACT 1, SCENE 1

> My only love _____ from my only hate!
> Too early seen _____, and known too late!
>
> JULIET · ACT 1, SCENE 5

> But soft, what light _____ yonder window breaks?
> It is the East, and _____ is the sun.
>
> ROMEO · ACT 2, SCENE 2

> _____ in a name? That which we call a rose
> By any _____ word would smell as sweet.
>
> JULIET · ACT 2, SCENE 2

> My bounty is as _____ as the sea,
> My love as deep. The more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are _____.
>
> JULIET · ACT 2, SCENE 2

> These violent _____ have violent ends
> And in their _____ die, like fire and powder,
> Which, as they kiss, _____.
>
> FRIAR LAWRENCE · ACT 2, SCENE 6

> A _____ o' both your houses!
>
> MERCUTIO · ACT 3, SCENE 1

> Hang thee, young baggage, _____ wretch!
> I tell thee what: get thee to church o' _____,
> Or _____ after look me in the face.
>
> CAPULET · ACT 3, SCENE 5

> Then I deny you, _____!
>
> ROMEO · ACT 5, SCENE 1

Next steps

For more quotations, sorted by theme and analysed: **love**, **fate**, **conflict**, **time**. Turn three of these quotations into full paragraphs with the **essay planner**, and check your method against the **close reading toolkit**. For a small daily dose of the language, **Daily Bard** shows one passage each morning with a plain-English reading on the back of the leaf.



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