**Romeo & Juliet key quotations – you need to learn these by heart and be able to explain their meanings, imagery, feelings & writer messages. You must include most of them in your essays!**

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| "forswear it sight, for I never saw a true beauty 'til this night" | Romeo talking about seeing Juliet for the first time, emphasises her beauty and how much it amazes him (Act 1 Scene 5 – masquerade ball) |
| "for never was a story of more woe, than this of Juliet and her Romeo." | The final lines of the play, said by the Prince. These emphasise the tragic nature of the story which is highlighted by the rhyming couplet. |
| "a plague on both your houses" | Mercutio (a Montague) talking to everyone in the street, just after he’s been stabbed by Tybalt in Act 3 Scene 1. He hates the Capulets, but also hates his own family. He sees them as just as bad as each other. Death has made him see the truth, which everyone else doesn’t see until the end. |
| "a rose by another name would smell as sweet" | Juliet talking about her love for Romeo and her problem with his name/family (Montague). She is thinking that a name is just a label and doesn’t change what’s underneath |
| "tis thy name that is my enemy" | Juliet again talking about her hatred of Romeo’s surname – it is the enemy of her family. |
| "a pair of star-crossed lovers take their life" | From the prologue, telling you what happens at the end, but hinting that it is written in the stars and already set and controlled by destiny and fate – humans are powerless to change it. |
| "does she not give us thanks? is she not proud?" | Lord Capulet becoming very angry at his daughter Juliet in Act 3 Scene 5. He cannot understand why she doesn’t accept his instruction of telling her to marry Paris. He’s totally changed from the man in Act 1 who said he would respect his daughter’s decisions. |
| "O! I am Fortune's fool!" | Romeo in Act 3 Scene 1 after Tybalt and Mercutio have died. He is discreetly referencing the prologue, where the audience learns that Romeo and Juliet are fated for misfortune. But Romeo also feels Fortune is being especially cruel; he just got married, and he might be put to death. His words bring the idea of fate and destiny back into the audience's mind. |
| "But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!" | Romeo in Act 2 Scene 2 (the balcony scene). Romeo already loves Juliet. In his words of adoration, he compares Juliet to a sunrise. Juliet hasn't seen Romeo below her window; she has no idea Romeo is even on her family's grounds. The important thing to take away is Romeo's use of language. Throughout the play, Romeo associates Juliet with 'light' imagery. He finds her love to be bright, sunny, and warm. |
| "O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?" | In Act 2 Scene 2 (balcony scene). Juliet is thinking about Romeo and his family ties. In Shakespearean times, "wherefore" meant "why". Juliet is asking why Romeo is a Montague. Although Juliet is unaware that Romeo is in the orchard below, she accurately points out a primary conflict in their relationship; their families probably won't accept or approve of their marriage. |