

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act III, by William Shakespeare
Literary Analysis: Dramatic Speeches

Characters in plays often deliver these types of **dramatic speeches**:

- **Soliloquy**: a lengthy speech in which a character—usually alone on stage—expresses his or her true thoughts or feelings. Soliloquies are unheard by other characters.
- **Aside**: a brief remark by a character revealing his or her true thoughts or feelings, unheard by other characters.
- **Monologue**: a lengthy speech by one person. Unlike a soliloquy, a monologue is addressed to other characters.

Characters often add meaning to speeches by making **allusions**—references to well-known people, places, or events from mythology or literature. For example, in Act II, Mercutio insultingly calls Tybalt “Prince of Cats,” alluding to a cat named Tybalt in French fables.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions that follow about an aside, a soliloquy, a monologue, and an allusion.

1. In Scene v, Juliet’s mother refers to Romeo as a villain. In an aside, Juliet says, “Villain and he be many miles asunder.” What is the effect of this aside? Why do you think Shakespeare wrote just the one remark as an aside?

2. In Scene v, Capulet delivers a monologue when he discovers that Juliet has rejected the match with Paris. Reread lines 177–197. What makes this speech a monologue?

3. Why is it important for Juliet and the others to hear Capulet’s monologue?

4. At the close of Scene v, Juliet delivers a soliloquy. Reread lines 237–244. What makes these last eight lines a soliloquy?

5. Explain Juliet’s allusion to Greek mythology in the opening lines of Scene ii.

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Toward Phoebus’ lodging!
