

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

Close Reading of Friar's Laurence's Soliloquy

Directions:

- Read Friar Laurence's soliloquy as if it is a poem: Read it to yourself, then read it out loud, and then mark the soliloquy. Put question marks near sentences you do not understand and put small summaries next to sentences that you do get.
- Answer the questions below.

SCENE III. Friar Laurence's cell.

Enter FRIAR LAURENCE, with a basket

FRIAR LAURENCE

...Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,
I must up-fill this osier cage of ours
With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.
The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;
What is her burying grave that is her womb,
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find,
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some and yet all different.
O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities:
For nought so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give,
Nor aught so good but strain'd from that fair use
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse:
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied;
And vice sometimes by action dignified.
Within the infant rind of this small flower
Poison hath residence and medicine power:

For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part; Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart. Two such opposed kings encamp them still In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will; And where the worser is predominant, Full soon the canker death eats up that plant	
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Step 2: Answer the following questions:

A. In the absence of lighting, Shakespeare had his characters “set the stage” in their speeches. What “scene” does the Friar set in this soliloquy?

B. What does Friar Laurence explain about the nature of these herbs?

C. How does this nature apply to the relationship between Romeo and Juliet?

D. Shakespeare uses many different literary devices. Identify the following devices in the Friar’s soliloquy:

Personification:

Metaphor:

Simile:

Allusions:

Foreshadowing:

E. How do these literary devices enhance Friar Laurence's speech?