

Gnomeo & Juliet Study Notes



Directed by: Kelly Asbury
Certificate: U (contains mild threat and innuendo)
Running time: 84 mins
Release date: 11 February 2011

Synopsis:

Based on William Shakespeare's famous play of a similar name, this animated film tells the familiar story of two star-crossed lovers caught in the middle of a family feud. The key difference being, our heroes are garden gnomes who come alive when humans turn their back! Gnomeo and Juliet fall in love at first sight but the rivalry between the blue and red gnomes means their love is forbidden. Can they persuade their clans to call a truce so they can be together?

These Study Notes are suitable for KS1/2 History, Literacy, Numeracy and DT.

Before watching the film

1. Use books and the internet to research William Shakespeare, whose play 'Romeo and Juliet' provides the story for the film. Find the answers to the following questions:
 - What did Shakespeare look like?
 - During which period of British history did Shakespeare live?
 - Which Kings and Queens ruled during Shakespeare's time?
 - What year did he write 'Romeo and Juliet'?
 - What are the names of some of his other plays and which of them have inspired films? Look out for a special appearance from the playwright during the film!
2. Find out what gardens were like in Shakespeare's time and how they have changed. Gardening is hard work and there is a lot to do to keep a garden looking nice. It's not just polishing gnomes! What do plants need to keep healthy? Make a list of all the jobs a good gardener needs to do and write an instruction manual for someone so they can look after a real or imaginary garden.
3. In a scene where Juliet has to say goodbye to Gnomeo, she says, "*Parting is such sweet sorrow*". This is a line from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. What do you think it means? How can sadness be good? The phrase 'sweet sorrow' is an oxymoron, when two very different words are used together to describe complicated feelings. Shakespeare used many more in his play, including:
 - loving hate
 - cold fire
 - honourable villain

Use a dictionary or thesaurus to find some oxymorons of your own. Can you use alliteration in one, just like 'sweet sorrow'?

After watching the film

1. Shakespeare's plays are divided into three genres; histories, tragedies and comedies. The history plays are about historical figures such as Kings. The tragedies are about doomed romance and death. They have very sad endings. The comedies are romantic, funny and end happily, often with a wedding. What kind of story would you say Gnomeo and Juliet is? Find out what genre 'Romeo and Juliet' was.

2. Design a dream garden for an area within your school. Measure the space available first. You could include gnomes, water features, bird tables, flowers etc. Draw a bird's-eye-view, scale diagram of your garden with pencil. Then you can build a scale model of your garden using card, tissue paper and other materials.
3. The feuding gnome families are stubborn and competitive. Write a letter to the head gnomes, Lady Blueberry and Lord Redbrick, to persuade them to end the feud between the blues and reds. Think of the best arguments. What would the benefits be of calling a truce?

Written by Matthew Poyton