Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Tessa Barone, Justin Bennett, Ethan Heusser, Aleah Hobbs, and Benjamin Watts served as lead editors for the project. Shannon Fortier, a recent OSU graduate, donated her time and talents. Jac Longstreth (a Biochemistry and Biophysics major!) provided a great deal of research and editing support, funded by the URSA Engage program at OSU. Jessie Heine was our graduate intern extraordinaire. Emily Kirchhofer designed the cover (deftly incorporating an abundance of ideas and opinions). Michelle Miller and Marin Rosenquist completed much of the late-stage editing and also promoted the project at the 2018 OSU Undergraduate Humanities Research Conference. The editors drew on editing work completed by their peers in ENG 435/535 (Fall 2017). And special thanks to Dr. Lara Bovilsky, who in January 2016 generously donated her time to lead ENG 435 students through the University of Oregon’s exhibit devoted to the First Folio (now an online exhibit Time’s Pencil); the student projects that resulted from that class inspired this textbook. We are also grateful to Anne Bahde, Rare Books at History of Science Librarian at the Oregon State University Special Collections and Archives Research Center, for introducing the student editors to surviving early modern books and for designing thoughtful, hands-on activities that prepared them for the project.

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I first read *Romeo and Juliet* in my 9th grade English class. It was hard and I hated it. I got as far as “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet” before I threw down the book. I could not believe that Shakespeare was so famous—it was all clichés! (What I did not yet realize was that those clichés came from Shakespeare.)

This edition of *Romeo and Juliet* was edited by students for students. We believe that reliably edited versions of the play should be available for free online. But we wanted ours to be easy to get in other ways as well. The editors—Oregon State University students who remember, far better than their professors, what it was like to read the play for the first time—carefully considered every pronoun, punctuation mark, and indent. Our goal: to make a friendly, confidence-building edition that supported classroom activities at the high school and college level. (For example, we wanted speakers’ names to be bold so that students reading aloud or performing in class would not miss their cues.)

The most radical thing about this textbook is its minimalism: it has fewer marginal glosses and footnotes than other scholarly editions. This was a deliberate choice: the editors felt that important conversations were more likely to happen in the classroom than in footnotes, and they wanted our edition to resist pushing readers toward specific interpretations. As a result, this textbook features a lot of white space. If, like us, you find it helpful to take notes (and to doodle) while you read, we hope you'll print it out and make it your own.

Our edition may look simple, but it’s not. In order to avoid overwhelming the page with notes—but still help the reader understand the sixteenth-century language—my students went word by word through the play, comparing three early modern printings to select the clearest language. Emboldened by the knowledge that there is no “authoritative” version of the play (we don’t actually know what Shakespeare wrote), they also made their own minor adjustments, typically in the less culturally iconic scenes and passages. For example, in Act 3 scene 5, Juliet’s father is angry that she does not want marry Paris on Thursday. In the first printed edition of the play (known as Q1, and printed in 1597), he says:

> But if you cannot wedde Ile pardon you.  
> Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.  
> Looke to it, thinke ont, I doe not vse to iest.  
> I tell yee what, Thursday is neere,  
> Lay hand on heart, aduise, bethinke your selfe,

In the second printed edition (Q2, printed in 1599) he says something slightly different:

> But if you cannot wedde Ile pardon you.  
> Graze where you will, you shall not house with me.  
> Looke to it, thinke ont, I doe not vse to iest.  
> I tell yee what, Thursday is neere,  
> Lay hand on heart, aduise, bethinke your selfe,
But and you will not wed, ile pardon you.
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me,
Looke too't, thinke on't, I do not vse to iest.
Thursday is neare, lay hand on hart, aduise,

Our edition modernizes spelling and punctuation, but makes other minor adjustments as well:

But if you will not wed, I'll pardon you!
Graze where you will; you shall not house with me.
Look to't, think on't; I do not often jest.
Thursday is near. Lay hand on heart. Think well.

Here, the student editors have retained Q1’s “But if” instead of Q2’s now-archaic “But and.” They have replaced the potential confusing phrase “use to” (which does not mean “used to” and would have required an explanatory note) with “often,” a word that retains the original meter of the line. Similarly, they swapped out “advise”—which today tends to mean “give advice” rather than consider it—with “think well,” a phrase that also picks up on Q1’s “bethinke your self.”

This project would not have been possible even a decade ago: in the past, if you wanted to compare the early printings up close you had to gain physical access to rare book libraries. Now, there are wonderful resources online—my students made use of digital images and transcriptions of the early editions of *Romeo and Juliet* on the invaluable website [Internet Shakespeare Editions](http://www.shakespeareinformation.com). Other essential sources included online dictionaries (including the [Oxford English Dictionary](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)), print editions (especially those printed by Pelican and The Folger Shakespeare Library), the [No Fear Shakespeare](http://www.no-fear-shakespeare.com) website, and David Crystal and Ben Crystal’s *Shakespeare’s Words* (Penguin, 2002). In preparation the editors took a course devoted to the print history of Shakespeare’s plays and studied recent scholarship on editing practices. They also interviewed high school teachers and students about their experiences with the text.

We believe that there is no one “perfect” edition of *Romeo and Juliet*—different readers need different things. This edition is ideal for first-time readers, and especially those of you who are young: its editors literally speak your language. That said, more seasoned readers of Shakespeare will appreciate its readability and the editors’ obvious respect for Elizabethan language. During the editing process I served as a resource to my students, lending my expertise on Shakespeare’s time period as needed. I checked my students’ work against the early modern editions to ensure that they had not misconstrued particularly archaic passages and that they preserved the play’s famous iambic pentameter. They did a really good job.

In the preface to the first collected works of Shakespeare—printed after the playwright’s death in 1623 and known as the First Folio—his colleagues John Heminge and Henrie Condell suggest that if you do not like reading Shakespeare’s plays, it is probably because you do not understand them. If that’s the case, “his
Friends, whom if you need, can be your guides”: in other words, if you want to enjoy Shakespeare, read his works with people who already get it. As an experienced teacher of Shakespearean drama, I can vouch that the opposite is also true: I did not love Romeo and Juliet until I read it with students.

I hope to hear from our readers—please reach out to me with your questions, suggestions, or thoughts about the text at rebecca.olson@oregonstate.edu.

Enjoy!

Dr. Rebecca Olson
 Associate Professor of English
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WELCOME!

Shakespeare is largely considered to be the greatest writer in the English language. In his lifetime, he wrote thirty-nine plays, most of which are still read and performed today. Of these thirty-nine plays, *Romeo and Juliet* is one of the best known. Shakespeare, however, did not invent the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. The tragic tale of two star-crossed lovers existed for a few hundred years before Shakespeare took a stab at it, and audiences in the early modern era were familiar with the story before setting foot in the theater. It might seem surprising to modern audiences that this story wasn’t treading any new ground at the time of its “conception,” and some might wonder why the brilliant, the mighty Shakespeare might have retold a story whose twisted ending came as no surprise to its audience. Shakespeare felt “driven” (in his own words) to write the narrative all over again, and something about his version impacted audiences so intensely that it is today considered one of the greatest stories ever told. Why is it that Shakespeare’s version affected his audience deeply enough that it is still firmly lodged in the literary cannon? What about this story is so enduring? And most importantly: why is it so popular?

The time period in which Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* debuted was one of particular distress and turmoil. At the time, England was ravaged by the Bubonic Plague, which had a fatality rate of 50%. Theaters were closed during mass outbreaks, which likely impacted Shakespeare financially, since he lived off the revenue from theater admissions to his plays. England was also in the grips of the Catholic-Protestant divide, which often erupted into violence. *Romeo and Juliet* was written, directed, and enjoyed during a time characterized by fear, tension, and disease, effectively making it a play for people of any era, who grapple with their own catastrophes and terrors. The role of theatre and literature (in society at large. and in...ahem...classrooms) is hotly debated, and we cannot claim to have a definitive answer to this age-old question. We can, however, assert that the endurance of plays such as this one speaks to their ability to move people, to speak to them in ways that inspire their preservation through the ages. And so, we became inspired to make this age-old classic more readily accessible to you, both in the digital format that has made its way onto your screens, or paper copies that you hold in your hands, and in way that the content has been carefully collected and presented.

OUR PROCESS

In an effort funded through Open Oregon State and with support from Oregon State's School of Writing, Literature, and Film, a group of 20 students, led by Dr. Rebecca Olson, crafted this edition of *Romeo and Juliet*. 
Juliet with the vision that it be easily read and accessed by high school students everywhere. As a group, we decided upon a set of guiding principles, which included an effort to modernize spellings that are no longer in use, encourage your interaction with the text, and (of course) support the Shakespeare-related Common Core educational goals. Above all, we hope that this edition will allow you, the reader, to move through the text with little need to stop and look up an unfamiliar word, or to try and figure out what in the world a “Lanthorne” is (it’s an old-fashioned word for “lantern.” Could you imagine using that word for a lantern? Neither could we, so we changed it).

To put all this together, we created a set of guidelines to get us started. We decided which text versions of the play to use as primary sources—we chose from five Quarto versions and four Folio editions, settling on Quarto 1, Quarto 2, and the First Folio. We decided that we wanted to include some very important things like footnotes—necessary to clarify some words and concepts, but often intimidating and numerous—but we determined that we’d keep them brief and use them only when necessary. We decided on some more mundane things, like the font we wanted (Garamond instead of that nasty Times New Roman. Whatever happened to Times Old Roman anyway?). We made countless other decisions at the outset of this project, and after establishing these ground rules we separated into editing groups, each focusing on a particular act within the play.

When the groups had completed their edited acts, we met again as a large group to review all the work together. It was at this time that we discovered how differently each editing group had approached our individual edited acts and scenes, while still following the same set of established guidelines. Should we use bold for the character names? How much white space should we include? Should there be one space after a line of dialogue, or two? How far should we indent the stage directions? What is the impact of these seemingly trivial questions on the experience of the reader? The team set out to analyze these and many other questions. Our deliberations were lengthy, and at times unexpectedly heated. We learned much about ourselves (and about our apparent passion for uniform margins and un-bolded character names).

After arranging our edition into a single, consistent document, we set out to consider the other requirements that go along with creating a new edition of an old work. We again separated into groups to address the facets of this project. There was a group to draft out scene and location summaries; a group to establish the technical formatting of the finished work; a group to reach out to high school teachers and students to better understand their needs and concerns when engaging with an old-fashioned work such as Romeo and Juliet; and a group to ensure that there was consistency in formatting throughout the edition.

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1. Quartos are standalone books, with the paper folded into quarters, and they contained the earliest printing of the plays. There are five Quarto versions of Romeo and Juliet, published in 1597, 1609, 1622, 1623, and 1637. Folios are compilations of several plays (they were published in folio format), and there are four Folio versions of Romeo and Juliet, published in 1623, 1632, 1664, and 1685.
also created a group to draft this introduction, and a group of lead editors met with Dr. Olson to identify all
topics that would be covered within it (we won’t list those as long as you promise to read the whole thing).
We also identified individuals to work on creating the cover of this edition (which, we are sure you will
agree, is top notch). With the groupings settled, and the work underway, the edition that you hold in your
very hands (or upon your very screen) began to take shape.

We recognize that there are numerous other editions out there, and fervently hope that this one will
be effectively suited to your educational needs. But this may beg the question: why are there so many
editions? Why not just use the original? Great question! The answer is that there are not just one
original edition. The idea of a singular “original” Shakespeare text is a common misunderstanding. Shakespeare was
a 17th Century playwright, so he didn't necessarily intend his works to be published for broad literary
audiences—most published versions were printed after his death. This being the case, there is much debate
regarding the authority of different published versions. In the particular instance of Romeo and Juliet, there
are multiple versions, all of which can be seen as authentic or “original”, but are dissimilar from each other
in sometimes slight and sometimes significant ways. Some scholars believe that people who attended the
play numerous times and recorded the dialogue in writing produced the earliest versions of the texts. Others
believe that these texts were generated by a few of the play actors. Theories abound regarding original
production. Maybe several of them are correct, maybe none, but whatever the case, this allows modern
editors to have a selection of authentic Shakespearean texts to draw from, which leads to some distinct
differences from one edition to the next. (Spoiler alert!) Did Juliet awaken before Romeo was fully dead?
The text seems to indicate that she didn't, but others have interpreted it differently. This play has passed
through the hands of many, many editors through the centuries, all of whom have left their own distinct
marks; our hope is that our varied perspectives and orientation toward our readers' needs will result in an
edition that is relatable in the events and motivations of characters that you will encounter.

SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

Shakespeare is famous for his plays. He is famous for the emotions and the responses that these plays inspire
in those who interact with them. He is credited with creating over 1700 original words alone in the English
language (you’re welcome, Jessica² ). And so, when we’re considering Shakespeare, we’re not looking just at
the play, or the performance, or its history—we’re looking at the language.

Language has acted as Shakespeare's central tool in creating some of the world’s greatest literary
compositions. Both a powerful playwright and literary icon, the fundamental aspects of what makes
Shakespeare’s work Shakespeare’s work in the first place—and what continues to perpetuate his worldwide
fame—can be understood in some of his most recognizable moments. Even without reading Romeo and

². Shakespeare gets the credit for first using many first names that are still popular today, including Jessica.
Juliet, the average high school student can identify “Wherefore art thou, Romeo?” as easily as they can fail a math test.

When we started out to create the world’s most accessible version of *Romeo and Juliet*, the biggest question that we were tasked to answer was: how do we treat the language? What needs to be changed? Should the text be completely modernized—removing early modern English altogether? What about iambic pentameter—the rhythmic meter that makes poetry of Shakespeare’s words? Is it necessary to preserve a rhythm that doesn’t seem so universal without the archaic pronunciation of the words within? Where does the line between historical preservation and accessibility meet, and how do we land at that crossroad?

The language in this edition is thus a compilation of the First Folio, Quarto 1, and Quarto 2, as well as the collective minds of twenty plus (how many of us are there?) students working diligently to achieve clarity and ensure comprehension. The language has been only slightly altered, so as to maintain Shakespeare’s original intent, and in order to also appeal to a more modern audience. The plot has remained untouched. Punctuation has been updated where appropriate. Spellings have been modernized. But the story is the same. The famous, dramatic, moving story of a forbidden love and its original contexts remains. If we have changed anything, it is so that such a story can be loved and adored (though, perhaps with a bit more reserve than either Romeo or Juliet display toward one another) and can be read by many, many more people.

*ROMEO AND JULIET ONSTAGE*

“But soft, what light through yonder window breaks” is probably one of the most quoted and easily recognizable lines of Shakespeare. Good ol’ Romeo and Juliet have been around for centuries, brought to life again and again through the text that houses them. This text is read in high schools, watched on the stage, adapted for film, and even re-written in terms of a text conversation. But where did it all begin?

Originally, *Romeo and Juliet* was designed to be played on a thrust stage, which extends into the audience, allowing viewers to watch from three sides. Scenery was sparse to allow for quick action and a focus on the carefully crafted language. There was a rear balcony staged as Juliet’s window and a trapdoor for her tomb. The play ran briefly in London following the Restoration of Charles II when William Davenant, acclaimed “son of Shakespeare” (whether literary or biological, we’re still not sure), presented it at Lincoln’s Inn Fields.

Several adaptations made their way around, including a version set in ancient Rome and a version in which a father and daughter played the titular characters in 1744, which was not widely accepted (for obvious reasons, we think). In 1748, David Garrick, a man renowned in the world of theatre, staged a production of *Romeo and Juliet* at Drury Lane and removed all sexual references and jokes present in the text. This version became the standard for the next century.

When Shakespeare was staging performances of *Romeo and Juliet*, most all actors were men, which means that Juliet was traditionally played by men dressed up as women. This tradition persisted until the late 17th
century. By the 19th century, playing the role of Juliet became an actress’s marker of success in the theatrical world, and by the mid-19th century girls were even allowed to take on the role of Romeo as well.

Throughout the 1900s, several noted playwrights and producers adapted and toured the play. William Poel of the Elizabethan Stage Society created a version chock-full of fast-paced action and complicated stage directions, or blocking. Before directing the 1968 film version of the play, Franco Zeffirelli created an adaptation of the original script for the stage, and then his film premiered in 1968 at the Old Vic Theatre in London. The Old Vic was traditionally a venue for live theater, and had never before hosted a film screening. The Italian renaissance setting at the Old Vic was so realistic and natural that audience members were awed by the never-before-seen representational style of stepping into a virtual snapshot of Verona.

The film was adapted again for Baz Luhrman’s 1996 Romeo + Juliet, a lush cinematic experience that exemplified Lurhman’s decadent style. This version starring Leonardo DiCaprio brought the tale of tragic romance to a whole new generation of teenagers. To this day, the play is read, performed, and referenced at a massive scale, but echoes of the original production linger.

LOVE AND DEATH: READING ROMEO AND JULIET TODAY

A play is more than words on a page; a play is a story full of feelings and experiences that the actors and the audience bring to the table. A play like Romeo and Juliet is an experience that captivates and challenges the imaginations of people across generations, across centuries. Romeo and Juliet is not a static story about a boy and a girl. It is an open story about love between two people—a story that adapts and changes in the minds and bodies that contemplate and reenact it. We believe this play offers a chance to explore what love can actually mean, from a wide variety of genders, sexual orientations, and experiences. It is a story about the tragedies and triumphs of love, and its special power lies in its ability to inspire contemplation of these ideas in all who encounter it.

Slowly but surely, our world is warming up to the idea that love is universal regardless of the identity of the bodies involved with it. More and more, people are exploring characters with more flexible categories of analysis, opening up new (or centuries-old) avenues of sexuality that challenge a heterosexual-dominant narrative. Actors of all ages are subverting historically gendered roles to inspire audiences to question their implicit assumptions. Players and playgoers are not disregarding what these stories were, but are imagining new possibilities for what these stories could be. In other words, it can be tempting to think that the script is rigidly set, but in actuality there is a real freedom in the performance. We encourage students and teachers alike to embrace that freedom, to widen their perspectives and see Romeo and Juliet (and plays in general) as tools to help explore what it means to be human.

While we’re on the subject of important social ramifications of the play, we feel it’s important to talk about the crux of the play’s tragedy: the choice Romeo and Juliet make to commit suicide. To some it can seem
strange, absurd, or even silly. Why would anyone kill themselves over someone they met only earlier that same week?

The suicides of Romeo and Juliet suggest that their love and subsequent marriage were more than the result of the exaggerated emotions of a first love. What other, less obvious factors were at play? What would drive someone to make the worst and most permanent of all mistakes? Rather than attempt to answer this question that has followed this text around like a phantom, we’ll leave you with some questions that help us contemplate the complicated tangle of intention and action in this play: How did Juliet view her future after being forced to marry someone she barely knew? Maybe Romeo felt locked into the family feud and was looking for an escape? By seriously considering the motivations that led these characters to a tragic end, can we learn how to better respond to those situations that inspire feelings of powerlessness?

In any case, we’ll leave the answering of those questions to you. Just as we have enjoyed Romeo and Juliet in its many forms, and from the many angles through which we have viewed it, we hope that you will enjoy this new edition!

Sincerely,

The Editors

Corvallis, Oregon
Spring 2018

3. If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, please reach out for help. There are people who care about you, and who want to help. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline can be reached at 1-800-273-8255.
LIST OF MAIN CHARACTERS

ROMEO, heir to the Montagues

JULIET, heir to the Capulets

LADY CAPULET, Juliet's Mother and Tybalt's Aunt by blood

CAPULET, Juliet's Father and Tybalt's uncle by marriage

LADY MONTAGUE, Romeo's Mother

MONTAGUE, Romeo's Father

MERCUTIO, Romeo's friend but pledges to neither house because he is related to Prince Escalus

TYBALT, Juliet's cousin

PRINCE ESCALUS, ruler of Verona

PARIS, engaged to Juliet and related to Prince Escalus

FRIAR LAWRENCE, religious man who marries Romeo and Juliet and gives Juliet the poison

NURSE, mother figure and confidant to Juliet

BENVOLIO, Lord Montague's nephew and Romeo's cousin

SAMPSON, Capulet's Servant

GREGORY, Capulet's Servant

BALTHASAR, Romeo's Servant

FRIAR JOHN, Friar Lawernce's messenger

ABRAM, Montague's servant

APOTHECARY, potion maker that sells Romeo the poison

PETER, Capulet's Servant
ACT 1

PROLOGUE

CHORUS

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge, break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows°
Doth with their death bury their parents’ strife.
This fearful showing of their death-marked love,
And the exhibition of their parents’ rage—
Which, but their children’s end, naught could remove—
Is now the two hours’ traffic of our stage

That which—if you with patient ears attend—
Here goes unsaid, our toil shall strive to mend.

❖❖❖

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Servants of the Capulet family start a fight with Montague family servants. Benvolio, a Montague, draws his sword and attempts to break up the fight. Tybalt, a Capulet, sees the drawn sword of Benvolio. Tybalt draws his sword and, after Benvolio tries to avoid conflict, Tybalt attacks. The fight escalates. Montague and Capulet enter the scene. The Prince enters and commands the fight to end. Frustrated with the family feud, the Prince declares a death sentence on anybody who starts more trouble.

In the aftermath, Lady Montague asks Benvolio if he’s seen Romeo, her son. Benvolio tells her that he saw Romeo earlier, but Romeo seemed troubled. Later, Benvolio approaches to ask Romeo about the
mood he’s in. Romeo replies that he is in love with Rosaline, but saddened that she doesn’t seem to love him back.

On a street somewhere in Verona:

Enter two servingmen of the Capulets

SAMPSON
Gregory, on my word, we’ll not carry coals¹.

GREGORY
No, for then we should be colliers².

SAMPSON
I mean that if we be in choler² we’ll draw.

GREGORY
Aye, while you live, draw your neck out of collar².

SAMPSON
I strike quickly when moved.

GREGORY
But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

SAMPSON
A dog of the house of Montague would move me.

GREGORY
To move is to stir; and to be valiant is to stand:
Therefore if thou art moved, thou runn’st away.

¹ To not carry coals: to bear no insults
² Collar might refer to a hangman’s noose.
SAMPSON

10 A dog of that house shall move me to stand;
    I will take the wall\(^3\) of any man or maid of Montague's.

GREGORY

That shows thee a weak slave\(^4\), for the weakest go to the wall.

SAMPSON

'Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever
thrust to the wall. Therefore, I will push Montague's men from
the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall.

GREGORY

The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

SAMPSON

'Tis the same. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have fought
with the men, I will be civil with the maids, and cut off their
heads.

GREGORY

The heads of the maids?

SAMPSON

Aye, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads\(^5\); take it in
what sense thou wilt.

GREGORY

Those who feel it must take it in that sense.

---

3. *take the wall*: There were no sidewalks at this time, so when passing one another on the street one person would "take the wall," forcing the other to walk in the gutter.

4. *slave*: meant as an insult to someone's class

5. *virginites*: maidenheads
SAMPSON
They shall feel me while I’m able to stand, and ‘tis known I’m a pretty piece of flesh.

GREGORY
’Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been poor-john. Draw thy too! Here comes of the house of Montague.

Enter ABRAHAM and BALTHASAR, servingmen of the Montagues

SAMPSON
My naked weapon is out. Quarrel, I will back thee.

GREGORY
How? Turn thy back and run?

SAMPSON
Fear this not.

GREGORY
No, marry°, I fear thee.

SAMPSON
Let us have the law on our side; let them begin.

GREGORY
I will frown as I pass by and let them take it as they will.

SAMPSON
Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is disgrace to them if they bear it.

5. poor-john: fish that was salted or dried because of its inferior quality

4 | Romeo and Juliet
ABRAHAM
   Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON
   I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAHAM
   Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON
   [To GREGORY] Is the law on our side, if I say aye?

GREGORY
   No.

SAMPSON
   No sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

GREGORY
   Do you quarrel, sir?

ABRAHAM
   Quarrel, sir? No sir.

SAMPSON
   If you do, sir, I am yours to fight. I serve as good a man as you.

ABRAHAM
   No better than mine.

SAMPSON
   Well, sir.

   Enter BENVOLIO
GREGORY
   Say ours is better; here comes one of our master's kinsmen.

SAMPSON
   Yes: better, sir.

ABRAHAM
   You lie.

SAMPSON
   Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.

   They fight

BENVOLIO
   Part, fools! Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

   Enter TYBALT

TYBALT
   What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds°?
   Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO
   I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword
   Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT
   What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word,
   As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.
   Have at thee, coward!

   They fight
Enter three or four citizens with clubs and partisans

CITIZENS OF THE WATCH

Clubs, bills, and partisans, strike!
Beat them down!
Down with the Capulets!
Down with the Montagues!

Enter CAPULET, in his gown, and LADY CAPULET

CAPULET

What noise is this? Give me my longsword, ho!

LADY CAPULET

A crutch you need! Why call you for a sword?

CAPULET

My sword I say! Old Montague is come
And flourishes his blade to spite me.

Enter MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE

MONTAGUE

Thou villain Capulet! Hold me not! Let me go.

LADY MONTAGUE

Thou shalt not stir one foot to meet a foe.

Enter PRINCE ESKALES with his entourage

PRINCE

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,

6. partisan: a weapon, consisting of a spearhead mounted on a pole
7. bill: a close combat weapon
MONTAGUE

Who set this ancient quarrel new abroach?  
Speak, nephew. Were you here when it began?

BENVOLIO

Here were the servants of your adversary
And yours, close fighting ere I did approach.  
I drew to part them; in the instant came

8. ornaments: articles of dress, decorative
9. abroach: in action or agitation
8 | Romeo and Juliet
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared,
Which, as he breathed defiance to my ears,
He swung about its head and cut the winds,
Which, nothing hurt at all, hissed it in scorn.
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows
Came more and more who fought on part and part,
Til the prince came, who parted either part.

**LADY MONTAGUE**

O, where is Romeo? Saw you him today?
Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

**BENVOLIO**

Madam, an hour before the worshipped sun
Peered forth the golden window of the east,
A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore
Which westward rooteth on this city-side,
So early walking did I see your son.
Towards him I made, but he was ‘ware of me,
And stole into the covert of the wood.
I, presuming his affections as my own,
Which then most sought where most might not be found,
Feeling one too many with my weary self,
Pursued my humor, not pursuing his,
And gladly shunned who gladly flew from me.

**MONTAGUE**

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew,
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs.
And all so soon as the all-cheering sun
Doth in the farthest east begin to draw

10. humor: fancy, whim; can also refer to mood
The shady curtains from Aurora’s bed,
Away from light steals home my heavy son,
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
And makes himself an artificial night.
Black and portentous will his humor prove
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

BENVOLIO
My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

MONTAGUE
I neither know it nor can learn of him.

BENVOLIO
Have you importuned him by any means?

MONTAGUE
Both by myself and many other friends.
But he, his own affections counselor
Is to himself—I will not say how well—
Keeping himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,
Like the flowerbud bit by an envious worm
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the same.
Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
We would as willingly give cure as know.

Enter ROMEO

11. Aurora: goddess of the dawn
12. importuned: persistently asked
BENVOLIO

See where he comes. So please you, step aside.
I'll know his grievance or be much denied.

MONTAGUE

I wish thee fortune in thy stay
To hear the truth. Come, Madam, let's away.

Exit MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE

BENVOLIO

Good morrow, cousin.

ROMEO

Is the day so young?

BENVOLIO

It's newly struck nine.

ROMEO

Aye me! Sad hours seem long.
Was that my father that went hence so fast?

BENVOLIO

It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

ROMEO

Not having that, which having, makes them short.

BENVOLIO

In love.

ROMEO

Out.
BENVOLIO

Of love.

ROMEOM

Out of her favor where I am in love.

BENVOLIO

Alas that love, so gentle in his view,13
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof.

ROMEOM

Alas, that love, whose view is blinded still,
Should without eyes see the path to our will.
Where shall we dine? Gods me, what fray was here?
Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.
That’s much to do with hate, but more with love.
Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
O anything that nothing first creates!
O heavy lightness, serious vanity!
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,
Still-waking sleep. All is not what it is!
This love feel I, for that who feels no love in this.
Dost thou not laugh?

BENVOLIO

No, coz, I rather weep.

ROMEOM

175 Good heart, at what?

13. view: in this case, appearance
12 | Romeo and Juliet
BENVOLIO

At thy good heart's oppression.

ROMEO

Why, such is love's transgression.
Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast
Which thou wilt propagate to have them pressed

With more of yours. This love that thou hast shown
Dost add more grief to too much of mine own.
Love is a smoke raised from the fumes of sighs;
When cleared, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
When vexed, a sea nourished with loving tears.

What is it else? A madness most discreet,°
A choking gall°, and a preserving sweet.

Farewell, my coz.

BENVOLIO

Wait, I will go along
And if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

ROMEO

°(expresses disapproval)

Tut°, I have lost myself. I am not here.
This is not Romeo; he's some other where.

BENVOLIO

Tell me in sadness: whom is it that you love?

ROMEO

What, shall I groan and tell thee?

BENVOLIO

Groan? Why no, but sadly tell me who.

14. discreet: subtle, wise, prudent
ROMEO

195  A sick man in sadness makes his will,
     Ill are urging words to one already ill.
     In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

BENVOLIO

      I aimed so near, when I supposed you loved.

ROMEO

      A right good marksman! And she's fair I love.

BENVOLIO

200  A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

ROMEO

      Well, in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit
      With Cupid's arrow; she hath Diana's\textsuperscript{15} wit
      And, proving chastity strong and well-armed,
      From love's weak childish bow she lives uncharmed.
      She will not stay the siege of loving words,
      Nor bear th' encounter of assailing eyes,
      Nor ope\textsuperscript{9} her lap to saint-seducing gold,
      O, she is rich in beauty; only poor,
      For when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

BENVOLIO

210  Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

ROMEO

      She hath, and in that sparing, makes huge waste.
      For beauty, starved by chaste severity,
      Cuts beauty off from all posterity\textsuperscript{9}.

15. Diana: Roman goddess of the hunt, who remained a virgin

14 | Romeo and Juliet
She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,
To merit bliss° by causing me despair.
She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow,
Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

BENVOLIO
Be ruled by me: forget to think of her.

ROMEO
O, teach me how I should forget to think!

BENVOLIO
By giving liberty unto thine eyes:
Examine other beauties.

ROMEO
'Tis the way
To call hers exquisite, in question more.
These happy masks that kiss fair ladies’ brows,
Being black, puts to mind that they hide the fair.
He that is struck blind cannot forget
The previous treasure of his eyesight lost.
Show me a mistress that is passing fair;
What doth her beauty serve but as a note
Where I may read who passed that passing fair.
Farewell. Thou canst not teach me how to forget.

BENVOLIO
I'll pay that doctrine or else die in debt.

Exit all

ACT 1, SCENE 2
Paris, a member of the Prince's family, speaks to Capulet about marrying his daughter Juliet. They debate about whether or not Juliet is old enough, at age thirteen, to be married. Elsewhere, Romeo and Benvolio are talking about Romeo's love of Rosaline. One of Capulet's servants invites them to a party Capulet is throwing—not knowing they are Montagues. Benvolio encourages Romeo to go, thinking that it will be a good chance to take his mind off of Rosaline. Romeo agrees to go because Rosaline will be at the party.

*Lord Capulet's private office within the Capulet estate; then on a street somewhere in Verona:*

*Enter CAPULET, COUNTY PARIS, and PETER, the servingman*

**CAPULET**

But Montague is bound as well as I,
In penalty alike, and 'tis not hard, I think,
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

**PARIS**

Of honorable reckoning are you both,
And pity 'tis you've lived at odds so long.
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

**CAPULET**

But saying more that I have said before:
My child is yet a stranger in the world.
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years.
Let two more summers wither in their pride
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

**PARIS**

Younger than she are happy mothers made.

**CAPULET**

And too soon marred are those so early made.
Earth hath swallowéd all my hopes but she.
She's the hopeful Lady of my earth.
But woo her, gentle Paris; get her heart.
My will to her consent is but a part.
And she agreed within her scope of choice
Lies my consent, and fair according voice.

This night I hold an old accustomed feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest.
Such as I love, and you among the store,
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.

At my poor° house, look to behold this night
°modest

Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light.
Such delight as do lusty young men feel
With well-apparelled April on the heel
Of limping winter steps. The same delight
Among fresh fennel buds° shall you this night

Inherit at my house. Hear all, all see.
You’ll like her most, whose merit most shall be
Which one more view of many, mine being one,
May stand in number, though in reckoning none.
Come, go with me.

He hands PETER a paper

[To PETER] Go, sirrah,° trudge about
Through fair Verona, find those persons out
Whose names are written there, and to them say

My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

Exit CAPULET and PARIS

PETER

Find them out whose names are written here? It is written that

the shoe-maker should meddle with his yard,° and the tailor with
his last,° the fisher with his pencil, and the painter with his nets.

16. fennel buds: unopened flowers that appear in springtime
17. sirrah: term of address for a man of lower station
18. yard: possibly referring to “yards” of clothing
19. last: tool involved in shoe-making
But I am sent to find those persons whose names are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person hath here writ. I must to the learned in good time.

Enter BENVOLIO and ROMEO

BENVOLIO

45 Tut, man, one fire burns out another’s burning.
One pain is lessened by another’s anguish.
Turn dizzy, and be helped by backward turning.
One desperate grief cures with another’s languish.
Take thou some new infection to thine eye,
And the rank poison of the old will die.

ROMEO

Your plantain leaf\(^\text{20}\) is excellent for that.

BENVOLIO

For what, I pray thee?

ROMEO

For your broken shin.

ROMEO kicks BENVOLIO

BENVOLIO

Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

ROMEO

55 Not mad, but bound more than a madman is.
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
Whipt and tormented, and–[To PETER] Good e’en, good fellow.

---

20. *plantain leaf*: thought to have curative powers

---

18 | Romeo and Juliet
PETER
    God ‘i’ good e’en. 21 I pray, sir, can you read?

ROMEO
    Aye, mine own fortune in my misery.

PETER
    Perhaps you have learned it without book.
    But I pray, can you read anything you see?

ROMEO
    If I know the letters and the language.

PETER
    A honest answer. Rest you merry.

ROMEO
    Stay, fellow, I can read.
    “Signeur Martino, & his wife and daughters; Count Anselme and
    his beauteous sisters; the lady widow of Vitruvio; Seigneur
    Placentio, and his lovely nieces; Mercutio and his brother
    Valentine; mine uncle Capulet; his wife and daughters; my fair
    niece Rosaline and Livia; Seigneur Valentio, and his cousin
    Tybalt; Lucio and the lively Hellena.”
    A fair assembly. Whither” should they come?  “where

PETER
    Up.

ROMEO
    Whither to supper?

21. God ‘i’ good e’en: “May God give you a good evening.”
PETER

To our house.

ROMEO

Whose house?

PETER

My master’s.

ROMEO

Indeed, I should have asked thee that before.

PETER

Now I’ll tell you without asking. My master is the great rich
Capulet, and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray
come and crush a cup of wine. Rest you merry!

BENVOLIO

At this same ancient feast of Capulets
Sups the fair Rosaline, whom thou so loves,
With all the admired beauties of Verona.
Go thither*, and with unattainted* eye

Compare her face with some that I shall show
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

ROMEO

If the devout religion of mine eye
Allows such falsehood, then turn tears to fires
And these who, often drowned, could never die,

Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!
One fairer than my love? The all-seeing Sun
Ne’er saw her match since first the world begun.
BENVOLIO

Tut! You found her fair none else being by,
Herself poised, with herself in either eye.

But in those crystal scales there let be weighed
Your lady’s love against some other maid
That I will show you, shining at this feast,
And she shall scant° show well that now seems best.

°hardly

ROMEO

I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
But to rejoice in splendor of mine own.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 1, SCENE 3

After a humorous exchange with the Nurse, Lady Capulet asks for Juliet’s thoughts on marriage. Juliet hasn’t thought about it much. Lady Capulet hints that Juliet should consider marrying Paris, who will be coming to the party tonight. Juliet agrees to observe him and consider the possibility.

Somewhere within the Capulet estate:

Enter LADY CAPULET and NURSE

LADY CAPULET

Nurse, where’s my daughter? Call her forth to me.

NURSE

Now by my maidenhead, at twelve year old I bade her come.
[Calls to JULIET] What, lamb! What, lady-bird!
God forbid, where’s the girl? [Calls to JULIET] What, Juliet?

Enter JULIET
JULIET
5 How now, who calls?

NURSE
Your mother.

JULIET
Madam, I am here. What is your will?

LADY CAPULET
This is the matter.—Nurse, give leave a while.
We must talk in secret.—Nurse, come back again,
10 I have remembered thou may hear our counsel.
Thou knowest my daughter’s of a pretty age.

NURSE
Faith, I call tell her age unto an hour.

LADY CAPULET
She’s not fourteen.

NURSE
I’ll lay fourteen of my teeth—and yet to my teen° be it spoken, I
15 have just four—She’s not fourteen. How long is it now to
Lammastide?°

LADY CAPULET
A fortnight° and a few odd days.

NURSE
Even or odd, of all the days in the year,

22. Lammastide: August 1st

°misery

°two weeks
Come Lammas-Eve at night shall she be fourteen.

Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls!—
Were born that day. Well Susan is with God.
She was too good for me. But as I said,
On Lammas-Eve at night shall she be fourteen,
That shall she. Marry, I remember it well.

’Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,
And she was weaned (I never shall forget it),
Of all the days of the year, upon that day.
For I had then laid worm-wood to my dug
Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall.

My Lord and you were then at Mantua.
Nay, I do bear a brain. But as I said,
When it did taste the worm-wood on the nipple
Of my dug, and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
To see it tetchy, and fall out with the dug.

“Shake,” quoth the dove-house. ‘Twas no need, I trow
To bid me trudge:
And since that time it is eleven years,
For then she could stand alone. Nay, by the rood,
She could have run and waddled all about

Or even the day before, she broke her brow,
And then my husband—God be with his soul,
He was a merry man—took up the child,
“Yea,” quoth he, “dost thou fall upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit,
Wilt thou not, Jule?” And, by my holidam,
The pretty wretch quit crying and said, “Aye.”
To see now how a jest shall come about!
I warrant that should I live a thousand years,

23. Susan: the Nurse’s daughter, who died
24. worm-wood: a bitter plant used in medicine and alcohol
25. When it did taste: Through here, the nurse refers to the infant Juliet as “it.”
26. tetchy: irritably or peevishly sensitive
27. ’Twas no ned...to bid me trudge: i.e., I didn’t need to be told twice to leave
28. by my holidam: similar oath to “by the rood”
I never should forget it. “Wilt thou not, Jule?” quoth he.

And the pretty fool stopped crying and said, “Aye.”

**LADY CAPULET**

Enough of this. I pray thee, hold thy peace.

**NURSE**

Yes, Madam. Yet, I cannot choose but laugh,

To think she should stop crying and say, “Aye.”

And yet I warrant she had upon her brow

A bump as big as a young cockerel’s stone. 29

A perilous knock, and she cried bitterly.

“Yea,” quoth my husband, “fall’st upon thy face,

Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age.

Wilt thou not, Jule?” She stopped and said, “Aye.”

**JULIET**

And stop thou too. I pray thee, Nurse, say “Aye.”

**NURSE**

Peace, I am done. God mark thee to his grace.

Thou wast the prettiest babe that e’er I nursed,

If I might live to see thee married once,

I’ll have my wish.

**LADY CAPULET**

Marry, that “marry” is the very theme

I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,

How stands your disposition to be married?

**JULIET**

It is an honor that I dream not of.

---

29. **cockerel’s stone**: a rooster’s testicle
NURSE
   An honor! Were not I thine only nurse,
   I would say thou had'st sucked wisdom from my teat.

LADY CAPULET
   Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you,
   Here in Verona, ladies of esteem
   Are made already mothers. By my count
   I was your mother much upon these years
   That you are now a maid. Thus in brief:
   The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

NURSE
   A man, young Lady! Lady, such a man
   As all the world. Why, he's a man of wax.

LADY CAPULET
   Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

NURSE
80   Nay, he's a flower, in faith, a very flower.

"truly"

LADY CAPULET
   What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
   This night you shall behold him at our feast.
   Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
   And find delight writ there with beauty's pen.
   Examine every several lineament
   And see how to each other lends content,
   And what obscured in this fair volume lies
   Find written in the margent of his eyes.
   This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
   To beautify him, only lacks a cover.

30. man of wax: as perfect as a man fashioned from wax
The fish lives in the sea, and ‘tis much pride
For fair without, 31 the fair within to hide.
That book in many eyes doth share the glory
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story.
95 So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him, making yourself no less.

NURSE

LADY CAPULET
Speak briefly. Can you like of Paris’ love?

JULIET
I'll look to like, if looking liking move.
100 But no more deep will I endart 32 mine eye,
Then your consent gives me strength to make fly.

Enter SERVINGMAN

SERVINGMAN
Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you called for, my
young lady asked for, the nurse cursed in the pantry, and
everything is in chaos. I must wait upon them. I beseech you,
105 follow quick.

LADY CAPULET
We follow thee. Juliet, the County° awaits. °(Paris)

NURSE
Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

31. **fair without**: In this instance, “without” means “on the outside.”
32. **endart**: to throw or cast like a dart
ACT 1, SCENE 4

Romeo, along with Benvolio and their friend Mercutio, leave for the party. As they go Romeo claims, among other concerns, that he will not dance. Mercutio twists Romeo's melancholy comments into sexual jokes. Romeo, not interested in Mercutio's humor, says that a dream convinced him that attending the party is a bad idea. Mercutio launches into a speech about Queen Mab, the fairy queen, who visits people in their dreams. Though the speech begins in a lighthearted manner, it takes a dark turn. Romeo snaps Mercutio out of his speech. Benvolio convinces them to get moving and get to the party.

On a street somewhere in Verona, near the Capulet estate:

Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, with five or six other maskers, torch-bearers

ROMEO

What speech shall be spoken to excuse us?
Or shall we move on without apology?

BENVOLIO

The date is out of such prolixity.33
We'll have no Cupid, tricked and blindfolded,
Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,34
Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper°.
But let them measure us by what they will;
We'll measure them a measure, and be gone.

ROMEO

Give me a torch, I am not for this ambling°.
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

33. The date is out of such prolixity: i.e., such boring excuses are unfashionable
34. Tartar: ethnic group known for shooting arrows while moving on horseback. Bow of lath: cheap wood used for pretend bows.

Benvolio is saying they won't have someone dressed up as Cupid introducing them to the party while holding this item.
MERCUTIO

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

ROMEO

Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes
With nimble soles; I have a soul of lead
That so stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

MERCUTIO

15 You are a lover: borrow Cupid's wings
And soar above a common bound.35

ROMEO

I am too sore enpierced with his shaft
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe.36
20 Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

MERCUTIO

And, to sink in it, so you burden love:
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,
Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.

MERCUTIO

25 If love be rough with you, be rough with love,
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.
Give me a case to put my visage° in,
A visor° for a visor. What care I
°face; expression
°mask

35. common bound: a normal jump, which was a popular dance move
36. bound a pitch above dull woe: i.e., muster any feeling but woe
If a curious eye doth note deformities?
Here are the beetle-brows\(^\text{37}\) that shall blush for me.

**BENVOLIO**

Come, knock and enter; and no sooner in,
But every man betake him to his legs.\(^\text{38}\)

**ROMEO**

A torch for me. Let wantons light of heart\(^\text{39}\)
Tickle the senseless rushes\(^\text{3}{1}\) with their heels,
For I am proverbed with a grandsier phrase.\(^\text{40}\)
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on,
The game was never so fair, and I am done.\(^\text{41}\)

**MERCUTIO**

Tut, dun's the mouse, the constable's own word,\(^\text{42}\)
If thou art done, we'll draw thee from the mire\(^\text{4}{0}\)
Or—save your reverence—love, wherein thou stickest
Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight, ho!

**ROMEO**

Nay, that's not so.

**MERCUTIO**

I mean, sir, in delay
We waste our lights in vain, like lights by day;

---

\(^{37}\) **Beetle-brows:** Mercutio's mask has beetle-brows (thick eyebrows)

\(^{38}\) **betake him to his legs:** i.e., let's start dancing

\(^{39}\) **wantons light of heart:** i.e., carefree partygoers

\(^{40}\) **For I am proverbed with a grandsier phrase:** i.e., I know an old proverb that applies here

\(^{41}\) **The game was never so fair, and I am done:** i.e., it's best to leave when the party is best

\(^{42}\) **Mercutio has interpreted “done” as dun:** a reference to the game “Dun the horse is in the mire,” in which players would try to lift a large log from the mire (mud). He refers to the phrase “dun's the mouse” (meaning “quiet as a mouse”), saying this is an appropriate saying for a useless policeman. Basically, he mocks Romeo for being mouselike and a stick-in-the-mud.

\(^{43}\) **save your reverence:** a phrase used to replace a rude word
Take our good meaning°, for our judgment's fit
Five times in that, ere once in our fine wits.

ROMEO
And we mean well in going to this masque°,
But 'tis no wit to go.

MERCUTIO
Why, may one ask?

ROMEO
I dreamt a dream tonight.

MERCUTIO
And so did I.

ROMEO
Well, what was yours?

MERCUTIO
That dreamers often lie.

ROMEO
In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.

MERCUTIO
O, then I see Queen Mab has been with you.
She is the Fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone,
On the forefinger of an alderman°,
Drawn with a team of little atomies°
Over men's noses as they lie asleep.
Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs°,
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers,
Her traces° of the smallest spider web,
Her collars° of the moonshine’s watery beams,
Her whip of cricket’s bone, the lash of philomé°,
Her waggoner, a small gray-coated gnat
Not half so big as a round little worm
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid.
Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
Made by the joiner° squirrel or old grub,
Time out o’ mind° the fairies’ coach-makers.
In this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers’ brains, and then they dream of love;
On courtiers’ knees, that dream on curtsies straight,
O’er ladies’ lips, who strait on kisses dream—which
Oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues
Because their breaths with sweetmeats° tainted are.
Sometime she gallops o’er a lawyer’s nose,
Then dreams he of smelling out a suit.
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pigs tail,
Tickling a person’s nose that lies asleep,
Then he dreams of another benefice.
Sometimes she drives over a soldier’s neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscados°, Spanish blades,
Of healths five-fathom deep,
Drums in his ears, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
That plaits the manes of horses in the night
And bakes the elklocks in foul sluttish hairs

°reins
°part of a harness
°film; fine thread
°carpenter
°candy
°ambushes

44. Time out o’ mind: for as long as anyone can remember
45. dream on curties straight: immediately dream about curtsies
46. tithe-pig: to pay a tax to their church, people would often choose to pay one pig out of ten
47. benefice: i.e., giving tax to a church
48. healths five-fathoms deep: The soldier would dream of toasts (“healths”) that go on and on; basically, cups of alcohol that never run dry.
Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.\(^{49}\)
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.
This is she—

**ROMEO**

Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!
Thou talkst of nothing.

**MERCUTIO**

True, I talk of dreams
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is as thin of substance as the air,
And more inconstant than the wind, who woos
Even now the frozen bosom\(^{0}\) of the North;
And, being angered, puffs away from thence,
Turning his tide to the dew-dropping South.

**BENVOLIO**

This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves.
Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

**ROMEO**

I fear too early, for my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night’s revels, and expire the term
Of the despised life closed in my breast
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But he that hath the steerage of my course,

---

\(^{49}\) *This is that very Mab...which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes*: Mab secretly tangles horses’ manes at night, which bring bad luck when untangled.
Direct my suit. On, lusty gentlemen!

BENVOLIO

Strike, drum!

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 1, SCENE 5

The party begins. Capulet greets guests, encouraging them to dance and have a good time. Romeo sees Juliet. For him, it's love at first sight. Tybalt recognizes Romeo as a Montague, and wants to fight. Capulet hears this and rebukes Tybalt. Capulet wants no disturbances at the party, and explains that Romeo is a respected youth in the community.

Romeo approaches Juliet, touching her hand. They flirt back and forth and eventually kiss. The Nurse finds Juliet and beckons her away. Romeo asks the Nurse who Juliet is. The Nurse tells him she's Capulet's daughter. Juliet is intrigued by Romeo, and convinces the Nurse to find out who he is. The Nurse finds out, and tells Juliet that Romeo is a Montague. Romeo and Juliet are each crushed to find out the identity of the other. They both feel powerful longing for one another despite their family conflict.

Inside the Capulet estate:

Enter SERVINGMEN with napkins

PETER

Where's Potpan, that he does not help us clear away? He took a plate? He eats from it?

FIRST SERVINGMAN

When good manners are found in just one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

SECOND SERVINGMAN

Take away the joint stools, remove the sideboards, and the plates

ACT 1 | 33
too, good thou, save me a piece of marzipan,\textsuperscript{50} and if thou loves me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell.\textsuperscript{51}

\textit{Enter ANTHONIE and POTPAN}

Anthonie and Potpan!

\textbf{ANTHONIE}

Aye, boy, ready.

\textbf{PETER}

You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought for in the great chamber.

\textbf{POTPAN}

We cannot be here and there too. Cheerly, boys, Be brisk for now, then the longest liver takes all.

\textit{Exit all}

\textit{Enter CAPULET, TYBAL T, JULIET, NURSE, LADY CAPULET as well as ROMEO, MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, and the other guests and servants}

\textbf{CAPULET}

Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes Unplagued with corns\textsuperscript{6} will walk about with you. \textsuperscript{6}foot calluses

Ah, my mistresses, which of you all Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty,\textsuperscript{52} She I’ll swear hath corns. Am I come near to truth? Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day When I could wear a mask and tell

\begin{quote}
A whispering tale in a fair lady’s ear Such as would please. ‘Tis gone, ‘tis gone, ‘tis gone.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{50} marzipan: confection of crushed almonds or almond paste, sugar, and egg whites

\textsuperscript{51} Susan Grindstone and Nell: his friends

\textsuperscript{52} makes dainty: coyly refuses
You are welcome, gentlemen!—Come, musicians, play!

Music plays, they dance

The hall, the hall, make room! And foot it, girls.

[To SERVANTS] More light, you knaves°. And turn the tables up.

And quench the fire. The room has grown too hot.

Ah sirrah, this unlooked-for sport feels well.

[To COUSIN] Nay sit, nay sit, good cousin Capulet,
For you and I are past our dancing days.
How long is 't now since last yourself and I

Were in a mask?

COUSIN CAPULET
By'r Lady, about thirty years.

CAPULET
What man, 'tis not so much, 'tis not so much.
'Tis since the nuptial° of Lucentio,
Come the years as quickly as they will,
Some five and twenty years than last we masked.

COUSIN CAPULET
'Tis more, 'tis more, his son is older, sir.
His son is thirty.

CAPULET
Will you tell me that?
His son was but a ward° two years ago.

ROMEO
What lady is that which does enrich the hand of yonder Knight?

53. By'r Lady: an exclamation derived from the phrase “by our Lady”
SERVINGMAN

I know not, sir.

ROMEO

Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright,
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiopian's ear,
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.
So shows like a snowy dove trooping with crows,
That yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
When dancing done, I'll find her place of stand,
And touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.
If my heart loved till now, I'll swear off it sight,
For I never saw true beauty till this night.

TYBALT

This by that voice, should be a Montague.
Fetch me my rapier, boy.

His PAGE exits

How dares the slave
Come hither covered with a masked face,
To laugh and scorn at our ceremony?
Now, by the stock and honor of my kin,
I'll strike him dead, and hold it not a sin.

CAPULET

Why, how now, kinsman? Wherefore storm you so?

TYBALT

Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe.
A villain that is hither come in spite,

54. rapier: a thin, sharp sword
55. slave: meant as an insult to his class
To scorn at our ceremony this night.

CAPULET

Young Romeo, is it?

TYBALT

'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

CAPULET

Content thee, gentle cousin. Let him alone.
He bears himself like a real gentleman.
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-governed youth.
I would not, for the wealth of all this town,
Here in my house do him disparagement.
Therefore be patient, take no note of him.
It is my will, so if this thou respect,
Show a fair presence, and give up those frowns
Which are ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

TYBALT

It fits, when such a villain is a guest.
I'll not endure him.

CAPULET

He shall be endured.
What, lordful boy! I say he shall. Go to.
Am I the master here or you? Go to.
You'll not endure him. God shall mend my soul!
You'll make a mutiny among my guests:
You will set chaos here. You'll be the cause!

56. lordful: lordly. Tybalt is being chastised for his presumptive attitude.
TYBALT

But Uncle, he shames us.

CAPULET

Go to, go to.
You are a saucy boy. Is’t so, indeed?
This trick may chance to scathe you, I know what.
Must you contradict me? Marry, ’tis time—

[To GUESTS] Well said, my hearts — [To TYBALT] You are a young fool. Go.


TYBALT

Patience forced, with willful choler meeting,
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
I will withdraw, but this intrusion shall,

Now seeming sweet, convert to bitterest gall.

Exit TYBALT

ROMEO

If I profane with my unworthiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, readily stand,
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

Good Pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much.
Such mannerly devotion shows in this,
For saints have hands, that pilgrims’ hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers’ kiss.

ROMEO

Have not saints lips? And holy palmers too?
JULIET
Aye, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO
O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do,
And pray. Grant thou, lest faith turn to despair?

JULIET
Saints do not move; they grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO
Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.
Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged.

They kiss

JULIET
Now have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO
Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again.

They kiss again

JULIET
You kiss by the book.

NURSE
Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

JULIET joins her mother

ROMEO
Who is her mother?
NURSE

Marry, bachelor,
Her mother is the lady of the house,
And a good lady, and so wise and virtuous.
I nursed her daughter that you talked withal.

I tell you, he that can lay hold of her
Shall have the chinks. 57

ROMEO

Is she a Capulet?
O, what price! My life is my foe's charge.

BENVOLIO

Away, begone! This sport has reached its best.

ROMEO

Aye, so I fear. The more is my unrest.

CAPULET

Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone!
We have a trifling foolish feast that comes.
Is it e'en so? Why, then, I thank you all.
I thank you, honest gentlemen, good night.—

[To SERVANTS] More torches here.— Come on, then, let's to bed.
Ah, sirrah, by my thought, it waxes late:
I'll to my rest.

Exit all but JULIET and NURSE

JULIET

Come hither, nurse. Who was that gentleman?

57. the chinks: i.e., lots of money (“chink” being the sound of coins gathered together)

40 | Romeo and Juliet
NURSE
The son and heir of old Tiberio.

JULIET
Who's he that now is going out the door?

NURSE
Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

JULIET
Who's he that follows here that would not dance?

NURSE
I know not.

JULIET
Go ask his name.

NURSE goes

If he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

NURSE returns

NURSE
His name is Romeo, and a Montague,
The only son of your great enemy.

JULIET
My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen, unknown, and known too late.
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.
NURSE
   What's this? What's this?

JULIET
   A rhyme I learned just now
   From one I danced withal.
   One calls within “JULIET!”

NURSE
   Anon, anon".                      “right away
   Come, let’s away. The strangers are all gone.

   Exit all
ACT 2

ACT 2 PROLOGUE

CHORUS

Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,
And young affection gapes° to be his heir
That fair for which love groan'd for and would die,
With tender Juliet match’d, is now not fair.

Now Romeo is beloved and loves again,
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks,
But to his foe supposed he must complain,
And she steal love’s sweet bait from fearful hooks:
Being held a foe, he may not have access

To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear;
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new-beloved anywhere:
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet
Tempering extremities with extreme sweet.

❖❖❖

ACT 2, SCENE 1

Mercutio and Benvolio wonder where Romeo has gone, and Mercutio mocks Romeo's love of Rosaline.

Outside the Capulet orchard wall:

Enter ROMEO alone

ROMEO

Can I go forward when my heart is here?
Turn back dull earth and find thy center out.

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO
BENVOLIO

Romeo, my cousin, Romeo! Romeo!

MERCUTIO

He is wise, and on my life he hath stolen home to bed.

BENVOLIO

He ran this way and leapt this orchard wall.
Call, good Mercutio.

MERCUTIO

Nay, I'll conjure° too.

Romeo, Humors, Madman, Passion, Lover,
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh,
Speak but one rhyme, and I'll be satisfied:
Cry out at me, “Aye me,” pronounce but “love” and “dove.”

Speak to my gossip° Venus one fair word,
One nickname for her pureblind° son and heir,
Young Abraham: Cupid he that shot so true,
When King Cophetua1 loved the beggar maid.

He hears me not, he stirreth not, he moveth not.
The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.
I conjure thee by Rosaline’s bright eyes,
By her high forehead,2 and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,

And the domains that there adjacent lie,
That in thy likeness, thou appear to us.

BENVOLIO

And if he hears you, that will anger him.

---

1. King Cophetua: An African king who had no interest in women until he fell in love with a beggar woman outside his palace.
2. high forehead: a sign of female beauty
MERCUTIO  
This cannot anger him. It would anger him  
To raise a spirit in his mistress's circle,  
Of some strange nature, letting it there stand  
Till she had laid it, and conjured it down.  
That were some spite. My invocation°  
Is fair and honest, and, his mistress's name,  
I conjure only but to raise him up.

BENVOLIO  
Come, he hath hidden himself among these trees  
To be comforted by the humorous° night.  
Blind is his love, which best befits the dark.

MERCUTIO  
If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.  
Now he will sit under a medlar tree,°  
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit,  
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.  
O Romeo, that she were, O that she were  
An open arse, and thou a “poperin” pear.  
Romeo, goodnight, I'll go to my trundle bed,  
This field bed is too cold for me to sleep.  
Come, shall we go?

BENVOLIO  
Go then, for it is in vain  
To seek him here that means not to be found.

Exit BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO

---

3. Now he will sit...medlar tree: Medlar tree fruit, also called the “open-arse,” was resemble to an anus.
4. poperin pear: pun for male genitalia; “pop her in”
ROMEO

He laughs at scars that never felt a wound.

❖❖❖

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Juliet appears in a window above Romeo, and she thinks she’s alone. She talks to herself, lamenting Romeo’s nature as a Montague. She wishes he would abandon his name, or that she could abandon hers, so that they could be together. Upon hearing this, Romeo reveals himself and professes his love to Juliet. Juliet shares the feelings of love, but worries that Romeo's feelings might be fleeting. The Nurse calls for Juliet, and the couple once again declares their love for each other, Juliet promising to send somebody to him at nine the next morning.

In the Capulet orchard:

Enter JULIET on balcony

ROMEO

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet is the Sun.
Arise, fair Sun, and kill the envious Moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.
Be not her maid, since she is envious,
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.
It is my lady, O it is my love, O that she knew she were.
She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold. ‘Tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the Heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

5. Vestal livery: clothing worn by the maidens of Diana, the Roman goddess of the moon
What if her eyes were there and they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight does a lamp; her eye in Heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand?
O, that I were a glove upon that hand
That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET
Aye, me.

ROMEO

She speaks.
O, speak again, bright Angel! For thou art
As glorious to this night, being over my head
As is a winged messenger of Heaven
Unto the white, upturned, wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy, puffing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name.
Or if thou will not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[To himself] Shall I hear more or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

‘Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou art thou self, though, not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man.
What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that divine perfection which he owes.
Without that title Romeo, doff\textsuperscript{b} thy name,
And for thy name which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

**ROMEO**

I take thee at thy word,
Call me but love, and I’ll be new baptized.
Henceforth, I never will be Romeo.

**JULIET**

What man art thou, that thus bescreened\textsuperscript{a} by night,
So stumbles on my counsel\textsuperscript{c}?

**ROMEO**

By a name, I know not how to tell thee who I am.
My name, dear Saint, is hateful to myself
Because it is an enemy to thee.
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

**JULIET**

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue’s uttering, yet I know the sound.
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

**ROMEO**

Neither, fair Saint, if either thee dislike.

**JULIET**

How camest thou hither?
Tell me, and wherefore?

The orchard walls are high and hard to climb
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROME0
With love’s light wings did I o’erperch these walls,
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do, that dares love attempt,
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

JULIET
If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROME0
Alas, there lies more peril in thine eyes,
Than twenty of their swords. Look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET
I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROME0
I have night’s cloak to hide me from their eyes,
And, but thou love me, let them find me here.
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death prolonged, wanted of thy love.

JULIET
By whose direction found’st thou out this place?

ROME0
By love, that first did prompt me to inquire.
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, were thou as far
As the vast shore washeth with the farthest sea,
I should adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET
Thou knowest the mask of night on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.

Fain° would I dwell on form°. Fain, fain deny
What I have spoke. But farewell complements°!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “Aye,”
And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear’st,
Thou might prove false. At lovers' perjuries

They say Jove° laughs. O gentle Romeo
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.
Or if thou think I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse°, and say thee nay
So thou wilt woo; but else not for the world.

In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond:
And therefore thou might think my behavior light°.
But trust me, gentleman, I’ll prove more true
Than those who have more cunning to be strange°.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,

But that thou overheard, ere I was ‘ware,
My true love's passion. Therefore, pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO
Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,

That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

6. Jove. Another name for Jupiter, the king of gods in Roman mythology
JULIET

O swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all.
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry, "worship"
And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love—

JULIET

Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy in this contract tonight.
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden,
Too like the lightning which doth cease to be
Ere one can say, "It lightens." Sweet, good night.

This bud of love by summer's ripening breath
May prove a beauteous flower when we next meet.
Goodnight, goodnight! As sweet repose and rest,
Come to my heart, as that within my breast.

ROMEO

O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction can'st thou have tonight?
ROMEO

    Th’ exchange of thy love’s faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

    I gave thee mine before thou did’st request it,
    And yet I wish it would to give again.

ROMEO

    Would’st thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

JULIET

135  But to be frank and give it to thee again,
    And yet I wish but for the thing I have.
    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.

    NURSE calls from within

140  I hear some noise within, dear love. Adieu!
    [Calls within] Anon, good nurse! [To ROMEO] Sweet Montague, be true.
    Stay but a little. I will come again.

    Exit JULIET

ROMEO

    O blessed, blessed night! I am afraid,
    Being in night, all this is but a dream,
145  Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

    Enter JULIET again

JULIET

    Three words, dear Romeo, And goodnight, indeed.
    If that thy bent° of love be honorable,
    Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,
    By one that I’ll procure to come to thee,

°intentions
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite.
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee, my lord, throughout the world.

NURSE
[From within] Madam!

JULIET
I come, anon! [To ROMEO] But if thou mean not well,
I do beseech thee—

NURSE
[From within] Madam!

JULIET
By and by, I come!
[To ROMEO] To cease thy strife, and leave me to my grief,
Tomorrow I will send.

ROMEO
So thrive my soul—

JULIET
A thousand times goodnight!

Exit JULIET

ROMEO
A thousand times the worse to want thy light.
Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

ROMEO starts to go

Enter JULIET again
JULIET
165 Hush, Romeo! Hush! O, for a falconer’s voice
To lure this tassel-gentle back again.  
Bondage° is hoarse and may not speak aloud
Else would I tear the cave where Echo° lies
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
From repetition of “My Romeo.”

ROME0
It is my soul that calls upon my name.
How silver-sweet sound lovers’ tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending° ears.

JULIET
Romeo!

ROME0
My sweet?

JULIET
What o’clock tomorrow shall I send to thee?

ROME0
By the hour of nine.

JULIET
I will not fail. Tis twenty years ‘till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

7. O, for a falconer’s voice / To lure this tassel-gentle back again: Juliet wishes she could call back Romeo the way a falconer calls back a male falcon (“tassel-gentle”).
8. Echo: a figure from Greek legend; a woman who wasted away from heartbreak and remains only as the voice that echoes back to you
ROMEO

180  Let me stand here ‘till thou remember it.

JULIET

I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO

And I'll still stay to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET

185  ‘Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone,
And yet no further than a wanton’s° bird
That lets it hop a little from his hand
Like a poor prisoner in twisted cuffs,
And with a silken thread, plucks it back again,
190  So loving-jealous of its liberty.

ROMEO

I would I were thy bird.

JULIET

Sweet, so would I,
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Goodnight, goodnight. Parting is such sweet sorrow
195  That I shall say goodnight ‘till it be morrow.

Exit JULIET

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast,
Would I were sleep and peace so sweet to rest.
Hence will I to my ghostly° friar’s cell.

°spiritual

°spoiled child’s
His help to crave, and my dear hap° to tell.

Exit ROMEO

❖❖❖

ACT 2, SCENE 3

Friar Lawrence carries a basket of herbs and plants as he contemplates the goodness of the earth. Romeo finds the friar. The friar notices that Romeo hasn’t slept, and asks if Romeo slept with Rosaline in sin. Romeo denies it and describes his new love of Juliet. The friar is concerned at how quickly Romeo’s feelings have changed. Romeo convinces the friar to perform a wedding for Romeo and Juliet. The friar hopes that some good may come of it, perhaps even an end to the feud between the Capulets and Montagues.

Friar Lawrence’s cell in Verona; early morning:

Enter FRIAR alone with a basket

FRIAR

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;
And fleckèd darkness like a drunkard reels
From forth day’s path and Titan’s fiery wheels.⁹

Now ere the sun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer, and night’s dank dew to dry,
I must fill up this reed basket of ours
With deadly weeds, and precious juiced flowers.
The earth, that’s nature’s mother, is her tomb,
And is her burying grave, and is her womb.
And from her womb children of diverse kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find.
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different.

O, how great is the powerful grace that lies
In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities.

⁹. Titan’s fiery wheels: reference to Helios, Greek god of the sun
For naught so vile here on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give.
Nor aught so good but strained from that fair use—
Used unnaturally—stumbles on abuse.
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And vice sometimes, by action, dignified.

Enter ROMEO

FRIAR
With the infant rind of this weak flower,
Poison hath residence, and medicine power.
For this being smelt, with that part cheers our parts,
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
Two such opposèd 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.

ROMEO
Good morrow, Father.

FRIAR
Benedicte. 10
What early tongue so sweet salutes me?
Young son, it argues a distempered° head
If you so soon bade good morrow to thy bed.
Care keeps his watch in every old man’s eye,
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie.
But where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
Thou art uproused with some distemperament:
Or if not so, then here I hit it right:

10. Benedicte: a blessing
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

ROMEO

That last is true. The sweeter rest was mine.

FRIAR

God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?

ROMEO

With Rosaline, my ghostly Father? No,
I have forgot that name, and that name’s woe.

FRIAR

That’s my good son! But where hast thou been, then?

ROMEO

I’ll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.
I have been feasting with mine enemy
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me,
And, by me, wounded. Both our remedies
Within thy help and holy physic° lies.
I bear no hatred, blessed man: for now
My intervention likewise steads° my foe.

FRIAR

Be plain, good son, and homely° in thy drift.
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift°.

ROMEO

Then plainly know my heart’s dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,
And all combined, save what thou must combine
By holy marriage. Where, and when, and how
We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow
I'll tell thee as we pass, but this I pray:

That thou consent to marry us today.

FRIAR

Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!
Is Rosaline that thou didst love so dear
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

Jesus Maria, what a deal of brine
Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline?
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste.
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,

Thy old groans ring yet in mine ancient ears.
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.
If ever you were you, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.

And art thou changed, pronounce this sentence then:
Women may fall when there's no strength in men.

ROMEO

Thou chidest me oft for loving Rosaline.

FRIAR

For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

ROMEO

And bad'st me bury love.

11. To season: as in to salt
12. Women may fall: women will fail morally
FRIAR

85 Not in a grave
   To lay one in, another out to have.

ROMEO

I pray thee, chide me not. Her I love now
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.
The other did not so.

FRIAR

90 O, she knew well,
   Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell.
But come young waverer, come, go with me,
   In one respect I'll thy assistant be,
For this alliance may so happy prove,
95 To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

ROMEO

O, let us hence. I stand on sudden haste.

FRIAR

Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 2, SCENE 4

Benvolio and Mercutio wonder where Romeo has been. Benvolio found out from a Montague servant that Romeo never returned home the night before. Benvolio tells Mercutio that Tybalt has challenged Romeo to a duel. Mercutio describes why he hates Tybalt. When Romeo arrives, Mercutio mocks Romeo for being weak because of his love for Rosaline. Romeo neglects to tell them about Juliet. The

13. by rote: memorization without understanding
14. young waverer: indecisive young man

60 | Romeo and Juliet
Nurse enters with a Capulet servant, Peter. Romeo tells her to pass on a message: have Juliet meet him for confessional at Friar Lawrence’s cell that afternoon, where Friar Lawrence will marry them. The Nurse agrees.

Somewhere in Verona; morning:

Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO

MERCUTIO
Where the devil should this Romeo be? Came he not home tonight?

BENVOLIO
Not to his father’s. I spoke with his man.

MERCUTIO
Why, that same pale, hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline, torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

BENVOLIO
Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father’s house.

MERCUTIO
A challenge, I would swear.

BENVOLIO
Romeo will answer it.  

MERCUTIO
Any man that can write may answer a letter.

BENVOLIO
Nay, he will answer the letter’s master, how he dares, being dared.
MERCUTIO

Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead: stabbed with a white
wench's black eye; shot through the ear with a love-song; the very
pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft. And is
he a man to encounter Tybalt?

BENVOLIO

Why, what is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO

More than the Prince of Cats, I can tell you. O, he's the
courageous Captain of Compliments. He fights like you sing
pricksong, keeps time, distance and proportion; he rests, his
minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom. The very
butcher of a silk button, a dualist, a dualist; a gentleman of the
very first house, of the first and second cause; ah, the immortal
passado! the punto reverso! the hay!

BENVOLIO

The what?

MERCUTIO

The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting fanasticoes, these new
tuners of accents! By Jesu, a very good blade! A very tall man! A
very good whore! Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these

15. pin: peg marking the center of a target
16. butt-shaft: arrow with no barb
17. Prince of Cats: a figure from a popular story, Reynard the Fox, who is also called Tybalt
18. Pricksong: or “pricked-song,” is music performed from written notation, instead of from memory or by ear
19. minim: to rest half a note
20. very first house: a prestigious school for fencing
21. the immortal...the hay: Italian fencing terms
22. pox: exclamation of irritation
23. antic: possibly grotesque or “antique,” though due to the era's spelling and the context “antic” is likely
fashion-mongers, these pardon-me’s, who stand so much on the new form that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench. O, their bones, their bones!  

Enter ROMEO

BENVOLIO
Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

MERCUTIO
Without his roe, like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in. Laura to his lady was but a kitchen-wench; marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her; Dido, a dowdy; Cleopatra, a gipsy; Helen and Hero, hildings and harlots; Thisbe, a grey eye or two, but not worth mention.

[To Romeo] Signior Romeo, bonjour! There’s a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

ROMEO

Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit Did I give you?

MERCUTIO

The slip, sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?

ROMEO

Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was vital, and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

---

24. *their bones*: pun on French “bon”  
25. *roe*: fish eggs, or the “ro” in Romeo  
26. *dowdy*: unattractively dressed woman  
27. *Laura...Thisbe*: classical figures who killed themselves for love  
28. *You gave us the counterfeit*: i.e., you ditched us
MERCUTIO

That’s as much as to say: Such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

ROME0

Meaning to curtsy.

MERCUTIO

Thou hast most kindly hit it.

ROME0

A most courteous explanation.

MERCUTIO

Nay, I am the very pink° of courtesy.

ROME0

Pink for flower.

MERCUTIO

Right.

ROME0

Why, then is my pump well flowered.°

MERCUTIO

Well said. Follow me this jest now, till thou has worn out thy pump, that when the single role of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

29. my pump well flowered: i.e., my feet are tired from dancing
ROMEO

O single-soled jest,\(^{30}\) solely singular for the singleness.

MERCUTIO

Come between us, good Benvolio. My wits fail.

ROMEO

Swits and spurs, swits and spurs,\(^{31}\) or I’ll win this match.

MERCUTIO

Nay, if our wits run the wild goose chase, I am done: for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits than I am sure I have in my whole five. Was I with you there for the goose?

ROMEO

Thou wast never with me for anything when thou was not there for the goose.\(^{°}\)

MERCUTIO

I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

ROMEO

Nay, good goose, bite not.

MERCUTIO

Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp sauce.

ROMEO

And is it not, then, well served to a sweet goose?

\(^{30}\) single-soled jest: weak joke

\(^{31}\) Swits and spurs: i.e., make your horse go faster
MERCU'TIO

O, here’s a wit like cheveril" that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell" broad.  "stretchy leather  "forty-five inches

ROMEO

I stretch it out for that word “broad”, which added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.  "fat

MERCU'TIO

Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable; now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature: for this rivelinc love is like a great natural", that runs lolling" up and down to hide his bauble" in a hole.  "idiot  "jester’s baton  "loose

BENVOLIO

Stop there, stop there.

MERCU'TIO

Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair. 32

BENVOLIO

Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

MERCU'TIO

O, thou art deceived; I would have made it short: For I was come to the whole depth of my tale, and meant indeed to occupy the argument no longer.

Enter NURSE and her man, PETER

ROMEO

Here comes goodly stuff. A sail, a sail!

32. against the hair: against the grain

66 | Romeo and Juliet
BENVOLIO
   Two, two: a shirt and a smock.\textsuperscript{33}

NURSE
85   Peter.

PETER
   At your service.

NURSE
   My fan, Peter.

MERCUTIO
   Good Peter, to hide her face, for her fan’s the fairer face.

NURSE
   God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

MERCUTIO
90   God ye good evening, fair gentlewoman.

NURSE
   Is it good evening?

MERCUTIO
   Tis no less, I tell ye, for the bawdy\textsuperscript{34} hand of the dial is now upon the prick\textsuperscript{34} of noon.

NURSE
   Out upon you! What kind of man are you?

\textsuperscript{33} a shirt and a smock: meaning, a man and a woman
\textsuperscript{34} prick: clock point; male genitalia
PROMO

95 One, gentlewoman, that God hath made, for himself to mar.

NURSE

By my troth, well said. “For himself to mar,” quoth he? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

ROMEO

I can tell you, but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you sought him.

I am the youngest of that name, for lack of a worse.

NURSE

You speak well.

MERCUTIO

Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, in faith, wisely, wisely.

NURSE

If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.

BENVOLIO

She will indite him to some supper.

MERCUTIO

A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

35. By my troth: Upon my word
36. confidence: The Nurse fumbles on the word “conference.”
37. indite: Benvolio mocks the nurse by purposefully fumbling the word “invite.”
38. bawd: a hare; a go-between for prostitutes
ROMEO

What hast thou found?

MERCUTIO

No hare sir, unless it be a hare in Lenten pie,⁹⁹ that is somewhat stale and hoar⁴⁰ ere it be spent.

He walks by them and sings

‘An old hare hoar,
And an old hare hoar
Is very good meat in Lent.
But a hare that is hoar,

Is too much for a score,⁴¹
When it hoars ere it be spent.'⁴²

Romeo, will you come to your father’s? We’ll dinner thither.

ROMEO

I will follow you.

MERCUTIO

Farwell, ancient lady; farewell, [singing] ‘Lady, Lady, lady.’

Exit BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO

NURSE

Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant° was this that was so full of ropery°?°

ROMEO

A gentleman, Nurse, that loves to hear himself talk, and will speak more in a minute, than he will stand to in a month.

---

39. Lenten pie: pie with no meat
40. hoar: moldy; pun on the word “whore”
41. for a score: to pay for
42. An old...be spent: If the Nurse were a whore, she would be like old bread that is only eaten as a last resort.
NURSE

If he speak anything against me, I'll take him down, even if he were lustier than he is, with twenty such Jacks; and if I could, I'd find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-girls, I am none of his skains-mates.  

She turns to PETER

And thou like a knave must stand by, and see every knave use me at his pleasure?

PETER

I saw no man use you at his pleasure; if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel and the law on my side.

NURSE

Now afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave! Pray you, sir, a word. And as I told you, my young lady bid me inquire you out; what she bid me say, I will keep to myself, but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her in a fool's paradise, as they say, it would be very gross kind of behavior, as they say. For the gentlewoman is young, and therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

ROMEO

Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress, I protest unto thee—

NURSE

Good heart, and in faith, I will tell her as much. Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman.

43. skains-mates: friends who carry knives

44. protest: The Nurse mistakes the word “protest” for “propose.”
ROMEO

What wilt thou tell her Nurse? Thou dost not hear me.

NURSE

I will tell her, sir, that you do protest, which as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

ROMEO

Bid her devise some means to come to shrift° this afternoon, and there she shall at Friar Lawrence’s cell be shrived° and married. °have confession

Here is for thy pains.

 ROMEO offers her money.

NURSE

No, truly sir, not a penny.

ROMEO

Go to; I say you shall.

NURSE

This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

ROMEO

And stay, good Nurse, behind the abbey wall.
Within this hour my man shall be with thee,
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair,°
Which to the high top-gallant° of my joy
Must be my convoy in the secret night.

Farewell, be trusty, and I’ll quit° thy pains.
Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

°confession
°shriv°
°pay you for
°top-gallant: the top of the mast of a ship

45. cords made like a tackled stair: a rope ladder
46. top-gallant: the top of the mast of a ship
NURSE  
Now God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

ROMEO  
What sayest thou, my dear Nurse?

NURSE  
Is your man secret? Did you never hear say,  
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

ROMEO  
I warrant thee, my man’s as true as steel.

NURSE  
Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord, when ‘twas  
a little prating thing°. O, there is a nobleman in town, one Paris,  
that would fain’ lay knife aboard. But she, good soul, would  
happily see a toad, a very toad, than him. I anger her sometimes,  
and tell her that Paris is the properer man, but I’ll warrant you,  
when I say so, she looks as pale as any clout° in the versall°  
world. Doth not rosemary° and Romeo begin both with a letter?

ROMEO  
Aye, Nurse, what of that? Both with an “R.”

NURSE  
Ah, mocker! That’s the dog’s name,° R is for the—no, I know it  
begins with some other letter—and she hath the prettiest  
sententious° of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good

---

47. lay knife aboard: lay to claim Juliet  
48. versall: the Nurse fumbles on the word “universal”  
49. rosemary: In Hamlet, it is said that rosemary is “for remembrance” of the dead.  
50. dog’s name: “R” sounds like a dog’s growl  
51. sententious: the Nurse fumbles on the word “sentence”
to hear it.

ROMEO
Commend me to thy lady.

NURSE
Aye, a thousand times. Peter?

PETER
Anon.

NURSE
Before and apace°.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 2, SCENE 5

Juliet waits for the Nurse to return. When the Nurse returns, Juliet begs her for information. The Nurse delays, saying she’s too tired and her body is too sore. Juliet pressures her until the Nurse gives in and tells her that Romeo is waiting to marry her at Friar Lawrence’s cell.

Somewhere outside the Capulet estate:

Enter JULIET

JULIET
The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse.
In half an hour she promised to return.
Perchance she cannot meet him. That’s not so:
O, she is lame°! Love’s heralds should be thoughts
Which ten times faster glide than the sun’s beams
Driving back shadows over lowering hills.
Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw Love,⁵²
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid⁵³ wings.
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill
Of this day’s journey, and from nine till twelve,
Is three long hours, yet she is not come.
Had she affections and warm, youthful blood,
She would be as swift in motion as a ball,
My words would bandy⁶ her to my sweet love,
And his to me. But old folks,
Many feign as they were dead,
Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

Enter NURSE and PETER

O God, she comes. O, honey Nurse, what news?
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

NURSE

Peter, stay at the gate.

Exit PETER

JULIET

Now, good sweet Nurse—
O, Lord, why lookest thou sad?
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily.
If good, thou shames the music of sweet news
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

NURSE

O, I am weary. Let me rest awhile.
Fie,⁵⁴ how my bones ache! What a jaunt I had!

---

⁵² nimble-pinioned doves draw Love: as doves pull Venus in her chariot
⁵³ Cupid: son of Venus and god of desire, affection, and love
⁵⁴ Fie: Here, an exclamation, like “oh!”
JULIET

I would thou had'st my bones, and I thy news.
Nay, come, I pray thee, speak. Good, good Nurse, speak.

NURSE

Jesu, what haste? Can you not wait awhile?
Do you not see that I am out of breath?

JULIET

How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath
To say to me, that thou art out of breath?
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay,
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.
Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.  
Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

NURSE

Well, you have made a foolish choice. You know not how to
choose a man. Romeo, no, not he, though his face be better than
any man's; and his leg excels all mens'; and for a hand, and a foot,
and a body, though not much to talk on, yet they are past
compare. He is not the flower of courtesy, but I'll warrant him as
gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways, wench; serve God. What, have you
dined at home?

JULIET

No, no. But all this did I know before.
What says he of our marriage? What of that?

NURSE

Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I?
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

55. stay the circumstance: wait for details
My back a’ t’ other° side! Oh my back, my back.
Beshrew° your heart for sending me about
To catch my death with jaunting up and down.

JULIET
I’faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet Nurse, tell me, what says my love?

NURSE
Your love says, like an honest gentleman,
And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,
And I warrant, a virtuous—Where is your mother?

JULIET
Where is my mother?
Why she is within, where should she be?
How oddly thou repliest.
“Your love says like an honest gentleman:
Where is your mother?”

NURSE
Oh God’s lady dear,°
Are you so hot? Marry, come up, I trow.
Is this the poultice° for my aching bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

JULIET
What a fuss! Come, what says Romeo?

NURSE
Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

56. Oh God’s lady dear: Holy Mary, mother of God
JULIET

I have.

NURSE

Then hie you hence to Friar Lawrence’s cell,
There waits a husband to make you a wife.
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks;
They turn to scarlet, straight, at any news.
Hie you to church. I must another way
To fetch a ladder by which your love
Must climb a bird’s nest soon when it is dark,
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight.
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.
Go. I’ll to dinner; hie you to the cell.

JULIET

Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell.

Exit all

ACT 2, SCENE 6

Romeo and Friar Lawrence wait at the cell. Romeo says his current joy far outweighs any misfortune that may come. Juliet arrives. They all exit and the friar performs the wedding.

Friar Lawrence’s cell in Verona:

Enter FRIAR and ROMEO

FRIAR

So smile the heavens upon this holy act,
That, after hours, with sorrow chide us not!

ROMEO

Amen, amen, but come what sorrows will,
They cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short minute gives me of her sight.
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare,
It is enough I may but call her mine.

FRIAR

These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die like fire and powder.
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness
And is the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so.

Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Enter JULIET

FRIAR

Here comes the Lady. O, so light a foot
Will never wear out the everlasting flint.
A lover may bestride the gossamers,
That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall, so light is vanity.

JULIET

Good evening to my ghostly confessor.

FRIAR

Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

JULIET

And same to him, else is his thanks too much.

ROMEO

Ah Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
Be heaped like mine, and since thy skill be more
To blazon\textsuperscript{a} it, then sweeten with thy breath
This neighbor air,\textsuperscript{57} and let rich music’s tongue
Unfold the imagined happiness that we
Receive in either, by this dear encounter.

\textbf{JULIET}

Conceit\textsuperscript{b}, more rich in matter than in words,
\hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{“Understanding} Breaths of his substance, not of ornament.
They are but beggars that can count their worth,
But my true love is grown to such excess
I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

\textbf{FRIAR}

Come, come with me, and we will make short work.
\hspace{1cm} \\
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.

\textit{Exit all}

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{This neighbor air:} this air we share
ACT 3

ACT 3, SCENE 1

Benvolio urges Mercutio to come away with him and avoid the Capulets in the streets. Mercutio brushes him off. Tybalt and other Capulets arrive, whom Mercutio taunts. Benvolio tries to move the conflict somewhere private, but Romeo interrupts with his arrival. Tybalt challenges him to fight, citing prior grievances; Romeo refuses and attempts to de-escalate the situation. Mercutio goads Tybalt into a duel, which Romeo tries and fails to stop. Tybalt stabs Mercutio, who in his dying moments curses both the Montague and Capulet houses. Benvolio informs Romeo that Mercutio is dead; upon re-encountering Tybalt, Romeo fights and kills him. Benvolio convinces Romeo to flee before passersby arrive. The Prince and both families then arrive to the scene. Benvolio explains what happened, but Lady Capulet, observing Benvolio to be biased, urges the Prince to punish the Montague family by executing Romeo. The Prince chooses instead to banish Romeo from the city.

On a street somewhere in Verona:

Enter MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO

BENVOLIO

I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire,
The day is hot, the Capels° are abroad,
And if we meet we shall not 'scape a brawl,
For these hot days is the mad blood stirring.

MERCUTIO

Thou art like one of these fellows who, when he enters the confines of a tavern, claps down his sword upon the table and says “God send me no need of thee,” but under the influence of the second cup, draws it on the drawer°, when indeed there is no need.

BENVOLIO

Am I like such a fellow?
MERCUTIO
Come, come, thou art such a Jack in thy moods as any in Italy, and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

BENVOLIO
And what to?

MERCUTIO
Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou—why, thou wilt quarrel with a man who hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts°, having no other reason than that thou hast hazel eyes. What eye but such an eye would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat, and yet thy head has been beaten as addled° as an egg from quarrelling. Thou once quarreled with a man for coughing in the street because he hath wakened thy dog that had lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet° before Easter? With another for tying his new shoes with old ribbons? And thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling?

BENVOLIO
An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple° of my life for an hour and a quarter.

MERCUTIO
The fee-simple? O, simple!

Enter TYBALT and his company

1. What to? Mercutio deliberately misconstrues “to” as “two.”
BENVOLIO
By my head, here come the Capulets.

MERCUTIO
By my heel, I care not.

TYBALT
Follow me close, for I will speak to them.
Gentlemen, good den°. A word with one of you.

MERCUTIO
35 Only one word with one of us? Couple it with something. Make it a word and a blow.

TYBALT
You shall find me apt enough to that sir, an you will give me occasion.

MERCUTIO
Could you not take some occasion if not given?

TYBALT
Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.

MERCUTIO
Consort! What, dost thou make us minstrels?° An thou make minstrels of us, you will hear nothing but discords°. Here's my fiddlestick°; here's that shall make you dance—zounds,°
“Consort!”

2. minstrels: musicians, thought of as homeless wanderers
3. zounds: an exclamation or swearword
BENVOLIO

We talk here in the public haunt\(^4\) of men.
Either withdraw unto some private place,
Or reason coldly of your grievances,
Or else depart. Here all eyes gaze on us.

MERCUTIO

Men’s eyes were made to look, and let them gaze.

I will not budge for no man’s pleasure, I.

Enter ROMEO

TYBALT

Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.\(^5\)

MERCUTIO

But I’ll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery\(^6\). Marry, go before
into the field\(^6\), and he may be your follower; Your Worship in
that sense may call him “man.”

TYBALT

Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford
No better term than this: thou art a villain.

ROMEO

Tybalt, a reason which I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage\(^6\)
To such a greeting. Villain am I none.
Therefore farewell. I see thou knowest me not.

\(^4\) public haunt: frequent gathering place
\(^5\) Here comes my man: the man I want to fight; Mercutio deliberately misconstrues Tybalt’s “my man,” as “my servant.”
\(^6\) appertaining rage: appropriately angry reaction
TYBALT

Boy, that shall not excuse the injuries
That thou hast done me—therefore, turn and draw.

ROMEO

I do protest I never injured thee,
But love thee better than thou canst devise
Til thou shalt know the reason of my love.
And so, good Capulet—whose name I value
As dearly as mine own—be satisfied.

MERCUTIO

O, calm, dishonorable, vile submission!
Alla stoccatta carries it away.\(^7\)

*He draws.

Tybalt, you ratcatcher, will you walk?\(^8\)

TYBALT

What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO

Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives that I
mean to make bold withal, and, as you shall use me hereafter,
dry-beat\(^9\) the rest of the eight. Therefore, come, draw your rapier
out of your scabbard, lest mine be about your ears ere you be aware.

TYBALT

I am for you.

\(^7\) *Alla stoccatta carries it away*: the first thrust wins the fight
\(^8\) *will you walk?: i.e., will you fight me?*
\(^9\) *dry-beat*: beat with a sword
ROMEO
    Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up—

MERCUTIO
    Come, sir, your passado!

    *TYBALT and MERCUTIO fight*

ROMEO
79    Draw, Benvolio! Beat down their weapons!
    Gentlemen, for shame! Forbear this outrage.
    Tybalt, Mercutio, the Prince expressly hath
    Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.

    *ROMEO steps in between them*

    Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

    *TYLBALT under ROMEO’s arm stabs MERCUTIO, and leaves with his company*

MERCUTIO
85    I am hurt.
    A plague o’ both houses! I am sped°.
    Is he gone and hath nothing°?

BENVOLIO
    What, art thou hurt?

MERCUTIO
90    Aye, aye, a scratch. Marry, ‘tis enough.
    Where is my page?—
    Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

    *Exit PAGE*
ROMEO
Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

MERCUTIO
No—’tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but ‘tis enough, ’twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a grave man.  
° I am peppered°, I warrant, for this world. A plague o’ both your houses! Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat to scratch a man to death! A braggart, a rogue, a villain that fights by the book of arithmetic!  
° Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

ROMEO
I thought all for the best.

MERCUTIO
Help me into some house, Benvolio,  
Or I shall faint. A plague o’ both your houses!  
They have made worm’s meat of me.  
I have it, and soundly too. Your houses!

Exit MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO

ROMEO
This gentleman, the Prince’s near ally°,  
My very friend, hath got this mortal hurt  
In my behalf. My reputation stained  
With Tybalt’s slander; Tybalt, that an hour  
Hath been my cousin! O sweet Juliet,  
° Thy beauty hath made me effeminate°,  
And in my temper softened valor’s steel.

Enter BENVOLIO

10. Grave: serious; dead  
11. A dog... by the book of arithmetic: all referring to Tybalt
BENVOLIO
O Romeo, Romeo! Brave Mercutio is dead!
That gallant spirit hath aspiring° the clouds,
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

ROMEO
This day's black fate on more days doth depend. 
This but begins the woe others must end.

Enter TYBALT

BENVOLIO
Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

ROMEO
Alive in triumph, and Mercutio slain!
Away to Heaven, respective leniency,
And fire and fury be my conduct now.
Now, Tybalt, take the “villain” back again
That late thou gavest me, for Mercutio’s soul
Is but a little way above our heads,
Staying for thine to keep him company.
Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.

TYBALT
Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here
Shalt with him hence.

ROMEO
This shall determine that.

They fight; TYBALT falls and dies

12. This day’s black fate on more days doth depend: This day will affect future days
BENVOLIO

Romeo, away, begone!

The Citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.

Stand not amazed. The Prince will doom thee dead
If thou art taken. Hence, begone! Away!

ROMEO

O, I am fortune's fool!

BENVOLIO

Why dost thou stay?

Exit ROMEO

Enter CITIZENS

CITIZEN

Which way ran he that killed Mercutio?

Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

BENVOLIO

There lies that Tybalt.

CITIZEN

[To TYBALT] Up, sir, go with me.

I charge thee, in the Prince's name, obey.

Enter PRINCE ESKALES, MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE, CAPULET, and LADY CAPULET

PRINCE

Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

13. The Citizens are up: meaning, up in arms
BENVOLIO

O noble Prince, I can reveal all
The unlucky manage of this fateful brawl.
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

LADY CAPULET

Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child!
O Prince! O cousin! Husband! O, the blood is spilled
Of my dear kinsman! Prince, as thou art true,
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.
O cousin, cousin –

PRINCE

Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

BENVOLIO

Tybalt here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.
Romeo that spoke him fair\(^a\), bade him bethink
How nice\(^b\) the quarrel was, and urged withal
Your high displeasure. All this—uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed—
Could not make truce with the unruly spleen\(^c\)
Of Tybalt, deaf to peace, who straightway tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,
Who, just as hot, turned deadly point to point,
And, with a martial\(^d\) scorn, with one hand beat
Cold death aside, and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
Retorts it. Romeo, he cried aloud
"Hold friends! Friends, part!" and, swifter than his tongue,
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm
An envious\(^e\) thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled.
But, by and by, came back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertained revenge,  
And to't they went like lightning, for ere I  
Could draw to part them was stout Tybalt slain.  
And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and flee.  
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

LADY CAPULET

He is a kinsman to the Montague.  
Affection makes him false; he speaks not true—  
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,  
And all those twenty could but kill one life.  
I beg for justice which thou, Prince, must give:

Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live.

PRINCE

Romeo slew him; he slew Mercutio.  
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

MONTAGUE

Not Romeo, Prince. He was Mercutio's friend.  
His fault concludes that which the law should end:

The life of Tybalt.

PRINCE

And for that offense  
Immediately we do exile him hence.  
I have an interest in your hearts' proceeding—  
My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding.

But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine  
That you shall all repent the loss of mine.  
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses.  
No tears, no prayers, shall bribe away abuses.  
Therefore use none. Let Romeo hence in haste;

14. dear blood: beloved

90 | Romeo and Juliet
Else, when he is found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence this body and obey our will.
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 3, SCENE 2

Juliet impatiently waits to be with Romeo again. The Nurse returns and is evasive about what happened before finally explaining that Romeo killed Tybalt and was subsequently banished. In shock, Juliet defends Romeo to the nurse and tries to feel relief that her husband survived rather than the other way around. She despairs at Romeo’s banishment. The Nurse offers to bring Romeo to her for one final night before he leaves; Juliet agrees and sends the Nurse with the token of a ring.

Somewhere within the Capulet estate:

Enter JULIET alone

JULIET

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus’ lodging. Such a wagoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the west
And bring in cloudy night immediately.

Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaway’s eyes may wink, and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rights
By their own beauties, or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
Thou sober-footed matron all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match

15. Gallop apace...Towards Phoebus’ lodging: Juliet wants night to come; in Classical mythology Phoebus’ horses pulled the chariot of the sun across the sky.
16. Phaeton: Phaeton, the sun god’s son, was allowed to drive the chariot of the sun, but lost control and had to be killed by Zeus.
17. sober-footed matron all in black: like a widow dressed in black
Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods
Hood my unmanned blood bating in my cheeks
With thy black mantle, till strange love grow bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty—
Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night,
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.

Come, gentle night; come, loving black-browed night,
Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

O, I have bought the mansion of a love
But not possessed it; and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day,
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them. O, here comes my Nurse.

Enter NURSE with cords of rope

And she brings news, and every tongue that speaks
But Romeo’s name speaks heavenly eloquence—
Now, Nurse, what news? What hast thou there,
The cords that Romeo bid thee fetch?

NURSE
Aye, aye. The cords.

Throws down the rope ladder

JULIET
Aye me, what news?

18. Hood (cover with a hood), unmanned (untamed), and bating (fluttering) are all terms used in falconry.
19. Think true love acted simple modesty: to think of sex (“true love acted”) as modest
Why dost thou wring thy hands?

**NURSE**

Ah, welladay°! He's dead, he's dead, he's dead!  
°(expression of woe)

40 We are undone, lady, we are undone.  
°(expression of grief)

Alack° the day—he's gone, he's killed, he's dead.

**JULIET**

Can heaven be so envious?

**NURSE**

Romeo can,  
Though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo,  
Whoever would have thought it, Romeo?

**JULIET**

What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?  
This torture should be roared° in dismal hell.  
°used

Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but “Aye,”  
And that bare vowel “I” shall poison more  
than the death-darting eye of cockatrice.°

20 I am not I, if there be such an “I,”  
Or those eyes° shut that makes thee answer “Aye.”  
If he be slain, say “Aye,” or if not, “No.”  
Brief sounds determine of my weal° and woe.  
°happiness

**NURSE**

55 I saw the wound; I saw it with mine eyes—  
God save the mark°—here on his manly breast.  
A piteous corpse, a bloodied piteous corpse,

20. cockatrice: a mythical beast that can kill with a look  
21. Or those eyes: i.e., if those eyes are Romeo's  
22. God save the mark: i.e., God avert the ill omen
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed" in blood, "smear
All in gore" blood. I swooned at the sight. "clotted

JULIET

60 O, break my heart! Poor bankrupt, break at once!
To prison, eyes; ne'er look at liberty.
Vile earth, 23 to earth resign", end motion here:
And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier. 24

NURSE

O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!
O courteous Tybalt, honest gentleman,
That ever I should live to see thee dead!

JULIET

What storm is this that blows so contrary?
Is Romeo slaughtered? And is Tybalt dead?
My dearest cousin and my dearer lord?
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom, 25
For who is living if those two are gone?

NURSE

Tybalt is gone and Romeo banished.
Romeo that killed him: he is banished.

JULIET

O God, did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

NURSE

75 It did, it did, alas the day, it did.

23. Vile earth: here Juliet seems to be referring to her own body
24. And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier: meaning, my body and Romeo's will share a coffin
25. dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom: A biblical reference to the “last trump,” which announces Judgment Day
JULIET

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!
Ravenous dove-feathered raven,

Wolfish-ravening lamb!

Despisèd substance of divinest show®!
Just opposite to what thou justly seemest,
A damned Saint, an honorable villain.
O Nature! What hadest thou to do in hell

When thou didst bower® the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter
So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!

NURSE

There's no trust, no faith, no honesty in men.
All perjured, all forsworne, all naught®, all dissemblers®.
Ah, where's my man?—Give me some aqua-vitae®.—
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
Shame come to Romeo.

JULIET

Blistered be thy tongue
For such a wish! He was not born to shame.
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to fit
For 'tis a throne where honor may be crowned
Sole monarch of the universal earth.

O, what a beast was I to chide him!

NURSE

Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?
JULIET

Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,
When I, thy three hours wife, have mangled it?

But wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?
That villain cousin would have killed my husband—
Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;
Your tributary drops belong to woe,
Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy—

My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain,
And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband.
All this comfort, wherefore weep I then?
Some word there was worser than Tybalt's death
That murdered me. I would forget it fain°,

But, O, it presses to my memory
Like damned guilty deeds to sinner's minds.
“Tybalt is dead and Romeo banished.”
That “banished,” that one word “banished”
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death

Was woe enough if it had ended there;
Or, if sour woe delights in fellowship
And needly° will be ranked with other griefs,
Why followed not when she said “Tybalt's dead,”
“Thy father” or “thy mother,” nay, or both

Which modern° lamentation might have moved°.
But with a rearward following Tybalt's death,
“Romeo is banished.” To speak that word
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
All slain, all dead. “Romeo is banished.”

There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
In that word's death. No words can that woe sound.

26. No words can that woe sound: no words can express that woe
NURSE

Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corpse.
Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

JULIET

135  Wash they his wounds with tears? Mine shall go on
When theirs are dry, for Romeo is banished.
Take up those cords. Poor ropes, you are beguiled°,
Both you and I, for Romeo is exiled.
He made you for a highway to my bed,
140  But I, a maid, die maiden-widow'd.
Come cords, come Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed;
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

NURSE

Hie to your chamber. I'll find Romeo
To comfort you. I wot° well where he is.
Hark° you, your Romeo will be here at night.
I'll to him. He is hid at Lawrence's cell.

JULIET hands NURSE a ring

JULIET

O, find him! Give this ring to my true knight
And bid him come, to take his last farewell.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 3, SCENE 3

Friar Lawrence returns to Romeo, who was hiding in his quarters. He tells Romeo he has been banished. Romeo says he'd prefer execution to exile. Lawrence tries to make Romeo understand the Prince’s mercy, but he refuses to be consoled. The Nurse arrives and tells Romeo of Juliet's grief. In despair, Romeo draws his dagger to kill himself, but the Friar stops him and chastises him for being willing to abandon his wife in death. He urges Romeo to flee to Mantua until the issue can be settled,
and he and Juliet can be reunited. The Nurse leaves to prepare for Romeo’s arrival that evening, leaving Juliet’s ring with him. The Friar warns Romeo to leave for Mantua by dawn to escape capture.

*Friar Lawrence’s cell in Verona:*

*Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE*

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

Romeo, come forth; come forth, thou fearful man.
Affliction is enamored of thy parts;
And thou art wedded to calamity.

*Enter ROMEO*

**ROMEO**

Father, what news? What is the Prince’s doom?
What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand
That I yet know not?

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

Too familiar
Is my dear son with such sorry company.
I bring thee tidings of the Prince’s doom.

**ROMEO**

What less than Doomsday is the Prince’s doom?

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

A gentler judgment vanished from his lips.
Not body’s death, but body’s banishment.

**ROMEO**

Ha, banishment? Be merciful, say “death,”
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death. Do not say “banishment.”
FRIAR LAWRENCE

Here from Verona are thou banished;
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

ROMEO

There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence banishèd, is banished from the world.
And world’s exile is death. Then banishèd,
Is death, mistermed. Calling death “banished,”
Thou cut’st my head off with a golden axe,
And smiles upon the stroke that murders me.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death, but the kind Prince,
Taking thy part, hath rushed aside the law,
And turned that black word “death” to “banishment.”
This is dear mercy, and thou seeth it not.

ROMEO

Tis torture and not mercy. Heaven is here
Where Juliet lives, and every cat and dog,
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven and may look on her.
But Romeo may not. More validity,
More honorable state, more courtship lives
In carrion flies than Romeo. They may seize
On the white wonder of dear Juliet’s hand,
And steal immortal blessing from her lips,
Who even in pure and vestal° modesty
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin.
This may flies do, when I from this must fly,

27. Thy fault our law calls death: i.e., your crime is punishable by death
And says thou yet, that exile is not death?
But Romeo may not, he is banished.
Flies may do this, but I from this must fly;
They are free men, but I am banished.
Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden means of death—though ne'er so mean—
But “banishèd,” to kill me? “Banishèd?”
O Friar, the damned use that word in hell:
Howling attends it. How hast thou the heart,
Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
A sin absolver, and my friend professed,
To mangle me with that word “banishèd?”

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

Then, fond° mad man, hear me a little speak—
°foolish

**ROMEO**

O, thou wilt speak again of banishment!

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

I'll give thee armor to keep off that word.
Adversity’s sweet milk, philosophy,
To comfort thee though thou art banishèd.

**ROMEO**

Still “banishèd?” Hang up philosophy,
Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
Displant° a town, reverse a Prince’s doom,
It helps not, it prevails not.° Talk no more.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

O then I see that mad men have no ears.

---

28. *prevails not*: has no effect

100 | Romeo and Juliet
ROMEO

How should they when that wise men have no eyes?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

65 Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.  

ROMEO

Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel. 
Were thou as young as I, Juliet they love, 
An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd, 
Doting° like me, and like me banishèd, 
70 Then mightest thou speak, 
Then mightest thou tear thy hair 
And fall upon the ground, as I do now, 
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.°

There is a knock from within

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Arise; one knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.

ROMEO

75 Not I, unless the breath of heartsick groans, 
Mist-like, conceal me from the search of eyes, 

Continuous knocking

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Hark! How they knock.—Who's there?—Romeo, arise! 
Thou wilt be taken.—Stay awhile!—Stand up. 

Knock

29. dispute with thee of they estate: i.e., discuss your state of affairs
30. Taking the measure of an unmade grave: taking the measurements of a grave not yet dug
Run to my study.—By and by!°—God’s will.

What simpleness° is this?—I come, I come.° nonsense

Knock

Who knocks so hard? Whence come you? What’s your will?

NURSE

[From within] Let me come in, and you shall know my errand: I come from Lady Juliet.

Enter NURSE

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Welcome then.

NURSE

O holy Friar, O tell me, holy Friar, where’s my lady’s lord?

Where’s Romeo?

FRIAR LAWRENCE

There on the ground,

With his own tears made drunk.

NURSE

O, he is even in my mistress case,°

Just in her case. O woeeful sympathy!

Piteous predicament! Even so lies she,

Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering.—

Stand up, stand up. Stand and you be a man!

For Juliet’s sake, for her sake, rise and stand.

Why should you fall into so deep an O?°

31. By and by: just a moment
32. he is even in my mistress case: i.e., he is just like my mistress
33. so deep an O: moaning fit
ROMEO

Nurse.

NURSE

Ah sir, ah sir, death’s the end of all.

ROMEO

Spaketh thou of Juliet? How is it with her?
Doth not she think of me an old murderer,
Now I have stained the childhood of our joy
With blood removed but little from her own?
Where is she? and how doth she? and what says
My concealed Lady to our canceled love?

NURSE

Oh she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,
And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
And “Tybalt” calls, and then on “Romeo” cries,
And then down falls again.

ROMEO

As if that name, shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her; as that name’s cursed hand
Murdered her kinsman.—O, tell me Friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? Tell me that I may sack°
The hateful mansion.

FRIAR

Hold thy desperate hand!
Art though a man? Thy form cries out thou art.
Thy tears are womanly, thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast.
Unseemly woman in a seeming man,
And ill-beseeming° beast in seeming both!

120 Thou hast amazed me. By my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better tempered.
Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thy self?
And slay thy Lady, that in thy life lives,
By doing damned hate upon thy self?

125 Why rails° thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?
Since birth and heaven and earth, all three do meet
In thee at once, which thou at once wouldst lose?
Fie, fie°, thou shames thy shape, thy love, thy wit,
Which, like a usurer 34 abound'st in all

130 And uses none in that true use indeed
Which should bedeck° thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
Thy noble shape is but a form of wax
Digressing from 35 the valor of a man.
Thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,

135 Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish.
Thy wit, that ornament to shape° and love,
Misshapen in the conduct of them both,
Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask,
Is set afire by thine own ignorance,

140 And thou dismembered with thine own defense.°
What, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive,
For whose dear sake thou was but lately dead.
There art thou happy°. Tybalt would kill thee,
But thou slewest Tybalt; there art thou happy.

145 The law that threatened death becomes thy friend
And turns it to exile; there art thou happy.
A pack of blessings lights upon thy back;
Happiness courts thee in her best array;
But like a missbehaved and sullen wench,

150 Thou pouts upon thy fortune and thy love.

34. usurer: someone who makes a profit by lending money and being repaid with interest. This was considered greedy, immoral, and a misuse of wealth.

35. Digressing from: lacking of

36. thou dismembered by thine own defense: i.e., harmed by what was intended to defend
Take heed, take heed: such men die miserable,
Go, get thee to thy love as was decreed,
Ascend her chamber, hence, and comfort her.
But look° thou stay not till the watch be set,37

For then thou canst not pass to Mantua,
Where thou shalt live till we can find a time
To blaze° your marriage, reconcile your friends,
Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back
With twenty hundred thousand times more joy

Then when thou went forth in lamentation.—
Go before, Nurse; commend me to thy Lady,
And bid her hasten all the house to bed,
Which heavy sorry makes them apt to do.
Romeo is coming.

NURSE

O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night,
To hear such good council. O, what learning is!—
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

ROMEO

Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide°.

NURSE

Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir.

She hands ROMEO a ring

Hie you! Make haste, for it grows very late.

Exit NURSE

ROMEO

How well my comfort is revived by this.

37. the watch be set: when the night watchmen take their positions, usually at dusk
FRIAR LAWRENCE

Go hence, goodnight; and here stands all your state.\(^{38}\)
Either be gone before the watch be set,
Or at the break of day, disguised, go hence.

175 Sojourn° in Mantua. I'll seek out your man,
And he shall let you know from time to time
Every good hap° to you that happens here.
Give me thy hand. ‘Tis late; farewell, goodnight.

ROMEO

But that a joy past joy calls out to me,
It were a grief so brief to part with thee.
Farewell.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 3, SCENE 4

Lord and Lady Capulet explain to Paris that Juliet will not see him tonight due to her grieving for Tybalt. They agree to marry Juliet to Paris in a respectfully humble ceremony on Thursday. Lord Capulet commands Lady Capulet to break the news to their daughter.

Somewhere within the Capulet estate:

Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET and PARIS

CAPULET

Things have fallen out, sir, so unluckily,
That we have had no time to move our daughter.\(^{39}\)
Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,
And so did I. Well, we were born to die.

Tis very late. She'll not come down tonight.
I promise you, but for your company,

\(^{38}\) here stands all your state: i.e., everything depends on this

\(^{39}\) we have had no time to move our daughter: i.e., we haven't had time to convince Juliet
I would have been a-bed an hour ago,

PARIS

These times of woe afford no times to woo.
Madam, goodnight. Commend me to your daughter.

LADY CAPULET

10 I will, and know° her mind early tomorrow, °(will know)
Tonight she's mewed up to her heaviness.°

CAPULET

Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender°
Of my child's love. I think she will be ruled,
In all respects, by me. Surely; I doubt it not.—
15 Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed.
Acquaint her here of my son Paris's love,
And bid her—Mark you me?—on Wednesday next—
But soft°! What day is this? °wait

PARIS

Monday, my lord.

CAPULET

20 Monday, ha ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon.
A Thursday let it be. A Thursday, tell her
She shall be married to this noble Earl.—
Will you be ready? Do you like this haste?
We'll keep no great ado, a friend or two.
25 For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,
It may be thought we held him carelessly°
Being our kinsman, if we revel much.
Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,

40. mewed up to: shut up with
And there an end. 41 But what say you to Thursday?

PARIS

30 My Lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

CAPULET

Well, get you gone. A Thursday be it then!—
Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed.
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day.—
Farewell, my lord.—Light to my chamber, ho!—
Afore me, 42 it is so very late that we may call it early by and by.—
Goodnight.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 3, SCENE 5

In her chambers, Juliet and Romeo go back and forth on whether Romeo needs to leave yet or whether he can stay longer. The Nurse enters to warn them that Lady Capulet is approaching. Romeo departs in secret. Lady Capulet enters to talk to Juliet. Juliet pretends to hate Romeo while telling the audience that she forgives him completely. Lady Capulet tells Juliet that she is set to be married to Paris next Thursday. Juliet protests that it is far too soon. Her father enters, just as surprised as his wife that Juliet is still grieving. He expects Juliet to be pleased at the news of the marriage; when she begs him to change their plans, he flies into a rage, silencing the Nurse who jumps to Juliet’s defense. He threatens to disown Juliet if she refuses to marry and then leaves. Juliet asks her mother for help; she refuses and also exits. Juliet then goes to the Nurse for comfort, who tells her that she should marry Paris and be happy since Romeo is as good as dead in exile. Juliet decides to find Friar Lawrence for help, resolving to kill herself if he will not help her.

Juliet’s chambers within the Capulet estate, near a window overlooking the orchard:

Enter ROMEO and JULIET aloft

41. there an end: that’s it
42. Afore me: a mild swear

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JULIET

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,\textsuperscript{43} that pierced the fearful\textsuperscript{o anxious} hollow of thine ear.
Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

5

ROMEO

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale. Look, love: what envious streaks
Do lace the severing\textsuperscript{o parting} clouds in yonder east;
Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund\textsuperscript{o cheerful} day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

10

JULIET

Yond light is not daylight—I know it. Aye:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer
And light thee on thy way to Mantua.
Therefore stay yet; thou needst not to be gone.

15

ROMEO

Let me be ta’en\textsuperscript{o taken}. Let me be put to death.
I am content, if thou wilt have it so.
I’ll say yon gray is not the morning’s eye.
’Tis but the pale reflect of Cynthia’s\textsuperscript{44} brow;
And that is not the lark whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads.
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so—
How is my love? Let’s talk; it is not day.

20

\textsuperscript{43} It was the nightingale, and not the lark: The nightingale sings at night; the lark sings in the morning

\textsuperscript{44} Cynthia: another name for the goddess of the moon.
JULIET

It is, it is! Hie hence, begone!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
Some say the lark makes sweet division⁴⁰:

“This is not so, for she divideth us.

Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes.⁴⁵
O, now I would they had changed voices too,
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray⁴⁶,
Hunting thee hence with hunt’s-up to the day.

O, now begone! More light and light it grows!

ROMEÜO

More light and light, more dark and dark our woes.

Enter NURSE

NURSE

Madam.

JULIET

Nurse?

NURSE

Your Lady Mother is coming to your chamber.
The day is broke. Be wary; look about.

Exit NURSE

JULIET

Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

⁴⁰ the lark makes sweet division: Juliet is referring to the tale that the lark traded its pretty eyes for the toad’s ugly ones
⁴⁵ the lark and loathed toad change eyes: a song to wake huntsmen
ROMEO
   Farewell, farewell! One kiss and I’ll descend.

   They kiss, and ROMEO begins to climb down

JULIET
   Art thou gone so, love, lord, husband, friend?
   I must hear from thee every day in the hour,
   For in a minute there are many days.
   O, by this count I shall be much in years,
   Ere I again behold my Romeo.

ROMEO
   Farewell!
   I will omit no opportunity
   That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

JULIET
   O, thinkst thou we shall ever meet again?

ROMEO
   I doubt it not, and all these woes shall serve
   For sweet discourses in our times to come.

JULIET
   O God, I have an ill-divining soul.\footnote{ill-divining soul: i.e., a bad feeling}
   Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low,
   As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.
   Either my eyesight fails, or thou lookest pale.

ROMEO
   And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.
Dry sorrow drinks our blood.\(^{48}\) Adieu, adieu!

Exit ROMEO

**JULIET**

\(^{70}\) O Fortune, Fortune!\(^{49}\) All men call thee fickle.
If thou art fickle, what doest thou with him
That is renowned for faith\(^{°}\)? Be fickle, Fortune,
For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long,
But send him back.

**LADY CAPULET**

\(^{75}\) [From within] Ho, daughter. Are you up?

**JULIET**

Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.
Is she not down\(^{°}\) so late or up so early?
What unaccustomed cause procures\(^{°}\) her hither?

Enter LADY CAPULET

**LADY CAPULET**

Why, how now, Juliet?

**JULIET**

\(^{80}\) Madam, I am not well.

**LADY CAPULET**

Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?
And if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live.

\(^{48}\) *Dry sorrow drinks our blood.* It was thought that sorrow dried up the blood, drop by drop

\(^{49}\) *Fortune.* Fortuna, the goddess of chance, was thought to control peoples' fates, but did so in a very fickle and unpredictable manner
Therefore, be done. Some grief shows much of love,
But much of grief shows some want of wit.

JULIET
Yet let me weep for such a feeling° loss.

LADY CAPULET
So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend
Which you weep for.

JULIET
Feeling so the loss,
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

LADY CAPULET
Well, girl, thou weep’st not so much for his death,
As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.

JULIET
What villain, madam?

LADY CAPULET
That same villain: Romeo.

JULIET
[Hushed] Villain and he be many miles asunder°.
[To LADY CAPULET] God pardon him. I do, with all my heart
And yet, no man like he doth grieve my heart.

LADY CAPULET
That is because the traitor murderer lives.

JULIET
Aye, madam, from the reach of these, my hands
Would none but I might ‘venge my cousin’s death.

LADY CAPULET

We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not.
Then weep no more. I’ll send to one in Mantua,
Where that same banished runaway doth live,
Shall give him such an unaccustomed drink
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company.
And then I hope thou wilt be satisfied.

JULIET

Indeed, I never shall be satisfied
With Romeo, ‘til I behold him... dead
Is my poor heart so for a kinsman vexed°.

Madam, if you could find out but a man
To bear a poison, I would temper° it
That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,
Soon sleep in quiet. O, how my heart abhors°
To hear him named, and cannot come to him
To wreak the love I bore my cousin
Upon the body that hath slaughtered him.

LADY CAPULET

Find thou the means, and I’ll find such a man.
But now, I’ll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

JULIET

And joy comes well in such a needy time.

What are they, beseech° your ladyship?

LADY CAPULET

Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child,
One who, to put thee from thy heaviness°,
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy
That thou expects not, nor I looked not for.
JULIET
125 Madam, in happy time, what day is that?

LADY CAPULET
Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn.
The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,
The County Paris at Saint Peter’s Church
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride!

JULIET
130 Now, by Saint Peter’s Church, and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride!
I wonder at this haste; that I must wed
Ere he, that should be husband, comes to woo.
I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,
135 I will not marry yet, and when I do I swear
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
Rather than Paris. These are news, indeed!

LADY CAPULET
Here comes your father. Tell him so yourself,
And see how he will take it at your hands.

Enter CAPULET and NURSE

CAPULET
140 When the sun sets, the earth doth drizzle dew,
But for the sunset° of my brother's son
It rains downright. How now? A conduit°, girl? What, still in tears?
Evermore showring? In one little body
Thou counterfeit'st a bark°, a sea, a wind.
145 For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
Do ebb and flow with tears. The bark thy body is,
Sailing in this salt flood. The winds thy sighs,
Who, raging with thy tears and they with them,
Without a sudden calm,\(^{50}\) will overset
Thy tempest-tossed body.—How now, wife?
Have you delivered to her our decree?

**LADY CAPULET**

Aye, sir, but she will none. She gives you thanks.\(^{51}\)
I would the fool were married to her grave!

**CAPULET**

Soft, take me with you, take me with you,\(^{52}\) wife.
How will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blessed,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

**JULIET**

Not proud you have, but thankful that you have!

Proud can I never be of what I hate,
But thankful even for hate that is meant love.\(^{53}\)

**CAPULET**

How, how, how, how? Chopped logic. What is this?
Proud, and I thank you, and I thank you not?
And yet not proud? Mistress minion\(^{54}\) you,
Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,
But fettle\(^{°}\) your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle\(^{55}\) thither.

---

50. *without a sudden calm*: i.e., unless you calm down
51. *she gives you thanks*: i.e., she says no thanks
52. *take me with you*: catch me up
53. *that is meant love*: that is meant with love
54. *Mistress minion*: spoiled brat
55. *hurdle*: used to drag criminals to their executions
Out, you green-sickness\(^{56}\) carrion°! Out, you baggage°!
You tallow° face!

LADY CAPULET

Fie, fie! What, are you mad?

JULIET kneels

JULIET

Good father, I beseech you on my knees.
Hear me with patience, but to speak a word.

CAPULET

Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch.
I tell thee what: get thee to church on Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face.
Speak not, reply not, do not answer me.
My fingers itch!° Wife, we scarce thought us blessed
That God had lent us but this only child;
But now I see this one is one too much,
And that we have a curse in having her.
Out on her, hilding°!

NURSE

God in heaven, bless her!
You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

CAPULET

And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,
Good Prudence. Smatter with your gossips, go.

---

\(^{56}\) green-sickness: anemia, associated with the paleness of young virgins

\(^{57}\) My fingers itch: i.e., his fingers itch to hit someone
NURSE

  I speak no treason.

CAPULET

  O, God 'I' good e'en.

NURSE

  May not one speak?

CAPULET

  Peace, you mumbling fool.

    Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's drink,
    For here we need it not.

LADY CAPULET

  You are too hot!

CAPULET

  God's bread! It makes me mad!

    Day, night, hour, tide, time, work, play,
    Alone, in company: still my goal hath been
    To have her matched! And having now provided
    A gentleman of noble parentage,
    Of fair demesnes", youthful, and nobly-trained,

    Stuffed, as they say, with honorable parts,
    Proportioned as one's thought would wish a man—
    And then to have a wretched puling" fool,
    A whining mammet", to her fortune's tender
    Answer, "I'll not wed, I cannot love;
    I am too young, I pray you, pardon me."
    But if you will not wed, I'll pardon you!
    Graze where you will; you shall not house with me.
    Look to't, think on't; I do not often jest.

58. God's bread: a strong swear

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Thursday is near. Lay hand on heart. Think well.

If you be mine, I'll give you to my friend.
If you be not? Hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
For by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.
Trust to’t; bethink° you. I'll not be forsworn°.

"go back on my word "think hard

Exit CAPULET

JULIET

Is there no pity sitting in the clouds
That sees into the bottom of my grief?—
O, sweet, my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage for a month, a week,
Or if you do not, make the bridal bed

In that dim monument where Tybalt lies!

LADY CAPULET

Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.

Exit LADY CAPULET

JULIET rises

JULIET

O God, O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?
My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven.

How shall that faith return again to earth,
Unless that husband send it me from heaven
By leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me!
Alack, alack, that heaven should practice stratagems°
Upon so soft a subject as myself.

What sayst thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?
Some comfort, Nurse.
NURSE

Faith, here it is: Romeo is banished, and all the world to nothing. That he dares ne’er come back to challenge you. Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.

Then since the case so stands as now it doth,
I think it best you married with the county.
O, he’s a lovely gentleman:
Romeo’s a dish cloth to him. An eagle, madam,
Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye

As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,
I think you are happy in this second match,
For it excels your first. Or if it did not,
Your first is dead, or ‘twere as good he were,
Not living here, and you no use of him.

JULIET

Speakst thou from thy heart?

NURSE

And from my soul too; else beshrew them both.

JULIET

Amen.

NURSE

What?

JULIET

Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much.

Go in, and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeased my father, to Lawrence’s cell,
To make confession, and to be absolved.

59. all the world to nothing: I’d bet anything
NURSE

Marry, I will; and this is wisely done.

Exit NURSE

JULIET

Ancient damnation! O, most wicked fiend!

Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,

Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue

Which she hath praised him with above compare

So many thousand times? Go, counselor.

Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.

I'll to the friar to know his remedy.

If all else fail, myself have power to die.

Exit JULIET

60. _my bosom_: in this context, “bosom” means trust.
ACT 4

ACT 4, SCENE 1

Paris meets with Friar Lawrence, informing him that the wedding will be held on Thursday in a supposed attempt to soothe Juliet’s grief over murdered Tybalt. Juliet arrives for confession, and Paris attempts to pressure her into confessing her love for him. After Paris leaves, Juliet tells the Friar she is resolved to kill herself if he can offer no solution out of the impending marriage. The Friar offers her a plan: agree to the marriage, but drink a poison the night before that will make her appear dead while in reality leaving her asleep. The Friar will then send word to Romeo, who will return and rescue Juliet once she awakes in the family tomb. Juliet accepts.

Friar Lawrence’s cell in Verona:

Enter Friar Lawrence and County Paris

FRIAR LAWRENCE

On Thursday, sir? The time is very soon.

PARIS

My father Capulet will have it so,
And I am nothing slow to stall his haste.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

You say you do not know the Lady’s mind?
5 Uneven is the course. I like it not.

PARIS

Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt’s death,
And therefore have I little talk of love,
For Venus’ smiles not in a house of tears.
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous

1. Venus a mythical goddess often representing love
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway;
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage
To stop the inundation of her tears,
Which, too much minded by herself alone,
May be put from her by society.  

Now you do know the reason of this haste.

FRIAR LAWRENCE  

[To himself] I would I knew not why it should be slowed.
[To PARIS] Look, sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

Enter Juliet

PARIS  
Happily met, my lady and my wife.

JULIET  
That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

PARIS  
That “may be” must be, love, on Thursday next.

JULIET  
What must be shall be.

FRIAR LAWRENCE  
That’s a certain text”.

PARIS  
Come you to make confession to this father?

2. May be put from her by society: Paris is saying that with company, she might cry less
JULIET
   To answer that, I would confess to you.

PARIS
25    Do not deny to him that you love me.

JULIET
   I will confess to you that I love him.

PARIS
   So will ye – I am sure that you love me.

JULIET
   If I do so, it will be of more worth
      Being spoke behind your back than to your face.

PARIS
30    Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.

JULIET
   The tears have got small° victory by that,        °not much
      For it was bad enough before their spite.

PARIS
   Thou wrong’st it more than tears, with that report.

JULIET
   That is no slander, sir, when it's a truth,
35    And what I said, I said it to my face.

PARIS
   Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it.
JULIET
    It may be so, for it is not mine own. —
    Are you at leisure, Holy Father, now,
    Or shall I come to you at evening Mass?

FRIAR LAWRENCE
    My leisure serves me, somber daughter, now.
    My lord, we must ask for this time alone.

PARIS
    God shield I should disturb devotion!
    Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse you.
    Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss.

    He kisses her

    Exit Paris

JULIET
    O, shut the door! And when thou hast done so,
    Come weep with me – past hope, past care, past help.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
    O Juliet, I already know thy grief;
    It strains me past the compass of my wits.
    I hear thou must – and nothing may postpone it –
    On Thursday next be married to the County.

JULIET
    Tell me not, Friar, that thou hearest of this,
    Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it:
    If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,
    Do thou but call my resolution wise,
    And with this knife I'll help it presently.
    God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands.
    And ere this hand – by thee to Romeo sealed –
Shall be the label to another deed,
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt

Turn to another, this shall slay them both.
Therefore out of thy long-experienced time,
Give me some present counsel, or, behold,
‘Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that,

Which the commission of thy years and art
Could not to this issue true honor bring.
Be not so long to speak; I long to die
If what thou speak’st speak not of remedy.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
Hold, daughter! I do spy a kind of hope
Which craves as desperate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent.
If rather than to marry County Paris
Thou hast the strength or will to slay thyself,
Then it is likely thou wilt undertake

A thing like death to chide away this shame,
That copes with Death himself to ‘scape from it;
And, if thou darest, I’ll give thee remedy.

JULIET
O bid me leap – rather than marry Paris –
From off the battlements of any tower,
Or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears
Or hide me nightly in a charnel house,
O’ercovered quite° with dead men’s rattling bones,
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave

3. the commission of thy years and art: the authority of your age and skills
4. Charnel house: structure that stores burial remains
5. reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls: smelly bones and jawless skulls
And hide me with a dead man in his tomb;
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble,
And I will do it without fear or doubt
To keep myself a faithful unstained wife
To my dear lord, my dearest Romeo.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Hold then: go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow.
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.
And when thou art alone, take thou this vial,
And this distilling liquor drink thou off,
When presently through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humor; for no pulse
Shall keep his native rhythm but surcease°.
No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
To many ashes. Thy eyes' windows fall
Like Death when he shuts up the day of life;
Each part, deprived of supple government
Shall, stiff and stark and cold, appear like death,
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours
And then awake, as from a pleasant sleep.
Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead;
Then, as the manner of our country is,
In thy best robes uncovered on the bier°
Be borne to burial in thy kindred's grave;
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the meantime, by then thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our plan,
And hither shall he come, and he and I
Will watch thy waking, and that very night
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
And this shall free thee from this present shame,
If no inconstant toy nor womanish fear
Abate° thy valor in the acting it.

JULIET
Give me, give me! O, tell not me of fear!

He gives her the vial

FRIAR LAWRENCE
Hold! Get you gone, be strong and prosperous
In this resolve. I'll send a Friar with speed
To Mantua with my letters to thy lord.

JULIET
Love give me strength, and strength shall help afford.
Farewell, dear Father.

Exit all

❖❖❖

ACT 4, SCENE 2

Juliet returns to find her family preparing for the wedding. Repentant, she asks for forgiveness and agrees to marry Paris. Lord Capulet, in his excitement, decides to advance the ceremony from Thursday to Wednesday (tomorrow). Ignoring his wife’s protests, he instructs her to be with Juliet while he finishes preparations and sends word to Paris of the changed itinerary.

Somewhere within the Capulet estate:

Enter Capulet, Lady Capulet, Nurse, and Servingmen

CAPULET
So many guests invite as here are writ.

Gives a list to a SERVANT, who then exits.

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.
SERVINGMAN

You shall have none ill, sir, for I'll test if they will lick their fingers.

CAPULET

How canst thou test them so?

SERVINGMAN

Marry sir, 'tis an ill cook that will not lick his own fingers: Therefore he that will not lick his fingers goes not with me.

CAPULET

Go, be gone.

Exit Servingman

We shall be much unfurnished for this time.

What, is my daughter gone to Friar Lawrence?

NURSE

Aye, forsooth.

CAPULET

Well he may chance to do some good on her.

A peevish, self-willed harlotry it is.

Enter Juliet

LADY CAPULET

See, here she commeth from confession.

CAPULET

How now, my headstrong?

Where have you been gadding?
JULIET

Where I have learnt me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition
To you and your behests, and am enjoined\(^a\) compelled
By holy Lawrence to fall prostrate here [Juliet kneels]
To beg your pardon. Pardon, I beseech you!
Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

CAPULET

Now before God, this holy reverend Friar,
All our whole city is much bound\(^a\) indebted to him!
Send for the County. Go tell him of this.
I'll have this knot knit up tomorrow morning.\(^6\)

JULIET

I met the youthful lord at Lawrence's cell,
And gave him what became love I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

CAPULET

Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.
This is as't should be. Let me see the County.
Aye, marry, go I say, and fetch him hither.

JULIET rises

JULIET

Nurse, will you go with me into my closet
To help me sort such needful ornaments
As you think fit to furnish me tomorrow?

LADY CAPULET

No, not till Thursday. There's time enough.

---

6. this knot knit up tomorrow morning: this means Juliet will be married in the morning, a day earlier than planned.
CAPULET
   Go, Nurse, go with her.
   We'll to church tomorrow.

   Exit Juliet and Nurse

LADY CAPULET
   Methinks on Thursday would be time enough.

CAPULET
   I say I will have this dispatched tomorrow.

LADY CAPULET
   I pray, my Lord, let it be Thursday.

CAPULET
   I say tomorrow while she's in the mood.

LADY CAPULET
   We shall be short in our provision°.
   'Tis now near night.

CAPULET
   Tush, I will stir about.
   And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.
   Go thou to Juliet, help to deck° her up.
   I'll not to bed tonight. Let me alone;
   I'll play the housewife for this once.— [calls servants] What ho?
   They are all forth°.— Well, I will walk myself
   To County Paris, to prepare up him
   Against tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light
   Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed.

   Exit all

❖❖❖
ACT 4, SCENE 3

Juliet sends the nurse and Lady Capulet from her bedroom on the pretext of getting rest. She then experiences a series of doubts about the plan: what if the poison doesn't work? What if the Friar actually intends to kill her to preserve the sanctity of her first marriage? What if she wakes up too early and suffocates? What if waking in the tomb will drive her insane? She rebuts most of these fears and drinks the poison, falling into a death-like trance.

*Juliet's chambers within the Capulet estate:*

*Enter JULIET and NURSE*

**JULIET**

Aye, those attires are best; but gentle Nurse
I pray thee leave me to myself tonight
For I have need of many orisons°
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou know'st, is cross and full of sin.

*Enter LADY CAPULET*

**LADY CAPULET**

What, are you busy – do you need my help?

**JULIET**

No, madam, we have culled° such necessaries
As are behooveful° for our state tomorrow.
So please you, let me now be left alone;
And let the Nurse this night sit up with you,
For I am sure you have your hands full all
In this so sudden business.

**LADY CAPULET**

Goodnight.
Get thee to bed and rest, for thou hast need.

*Exit NURSE and LADY CAPULET*
Farewell:
God knows when we shall meet again.
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,
That almost freezes up the heat of life.
I'll call them back again to comfort me.—

Nurse!—What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.
Come, vial.

_Takes out vial._

What if this mixture should not work at all?
Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?

No, no, this shall forbid it.

_Takes out knife._

Lie thou there.
What if it be a poison, which the Friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored,
Because he married me before to Romeo?

I fear it is. And yet methinks it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
How, if when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Comes to redeem me? There's a fearful point:

Shall I not then be stifled° in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?

Or, if I live, is it not very like°
The horrible conceit° of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place—
As in the vault, an ancient receptacle
Where for these many hundred years the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are packed:
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,\(^7\)
Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort\(^6\).
Alack, alack, is it not like that I
In early waking, what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,\(^8\)
That living mortals hearing them run mad—
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed\(^6\) with all these hideous fears,
And madly play with my forefathers' joints?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
O look, methinks I see my cousin's ghost,
Seeking out Romeo that did spit\(^6\) his body
Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink; I drink to thee.

*She drinks and falls upon her bed within the curtains.*

❖❖❖

**ACT 4, SCENE 4**

The Capulets work through the night in preparation. Hearing Paris' arrival, Lord Capulet tells the Nurse to wake Juliet.

*Somewhere within the Capulet estate:*

*Enter LADY CAPULET and NURSE*

**LADY CAPULET**

Hold, take these keys and fetch more spices, Nurse.

---

7. *yet but green in earth*: freshly buried
8. *mandrakes*: plants whose roots grow in a humanlike shape and, according to legend, shriek when torn from the ground.
NURSE

They call for dates and quinces° in the pastry.°

Enter CAPULET

CAPULET

Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock hath crowed;°
The curfew bell hath rung. ‘Tis three o’clock:
Look to the baked meats, good Angelica,
Spare not for cost.

NURSE

Go, you cotquean,° go,
Get you to bed. Faith, you’ll be sick tomorrow
For this night’s watching.

CAPULET

No, not a whit. What! I have watched ere now
All night for lesser cause, and ne’er been sick.

LADY CAPULET

Aye, you have been a mousehunt° in your time,
But I will watch you from such watching now.

Exit LADY CAPULET and NURSE

CAPULET

A jealous-hood, a jealous-hood! Now, fellow, what is there?

Enter three or four SERVINGMEN with spits, logs, and baskets

9. pastry: pastry-making room
10. The second cock hath crowed: tradition had it that the cock crows first at midnight, then at 3AM, and then an hour before the sun rises
11. cotquean: here, a man doing women’s work or displaying womanish tendencies.
FELLOW
15 Things for the cook, sir, but I know not what.

CAPULET
Make haste, make haste, sirrah! Fetch drier logs.
Call Peter; he will show thee where they are.

FELLOW
I have a head sir, that will find out logs,
And never trouble Peter for the matter.

CAPULET
20 Mass, and well said. A merry whoreson, ha!
Thou shalt be loggerhead.—Good Father, ‘tis day.

Play music

The County will be here with music soon,
For so he said he would. I hear him near.
Nurse! Wife! What ho! What, Nurse, I say!

Enter NURSE

25 Go waken Juliet, go trim her up,
I'll go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,
Make haste. The bridegroom: he is come already.
Make haste, I say!

Exit all but NURSE

❖❖❖

ACT 4, SCENE 5

The Nurse enters Juliet’s bedroom, assuming her to be asleep, but then discovers her to be (apparently)

12. A merry whoreson: i.e., he's a funny son of a whore
13. loggerhead: could mean blockhead; could also mean having a big head (out of proportion to the body)
dead. Lady Capulet, Lord Capulet, Paris, and Friar Lawrence arrive consecutively and grieve at seeing Juliet in her current state. The Friar reassures the family that Juliet is surely well in heaven and urges them to bring her to church to begin the funeral rites. After they leave, musicians hired for the wedding linger, and, unconcerned by the day’s events, joke and banter about music before making their exit.

Juliet’s chambers within the Capulet estate:

Enter NURSE

NURSE
Why, lamb! Why, lady! Fie, you slugabed°!
Why, love, I say! Madam, sweetheart! Why, bride!
What, not a word? You take your pennyworths° now,
Sleep for a week, for the next night I warrant
The County Paris hath set up his rest
That you shall rest but little.—God forgive me.
Marry and Amen! How sound is she asleep.
I must needs wake her.—Madam, madam, madam!
Aye, let the County take you in your bed;
He’ll fright you up, i’faith. Will it not be?
What, dressed and in your clothes and down again?
I must needs wake you. Lady, lady, lady!
Alas, alas! Help, help! My lady’s dead!
O welladay° that ever I was born!
Some aqua-vitae, ho! My lord, my lady!

Enter LADY CAPULET

LADY CAPULET
What noise is here?

NURSE
O lamentable day!

14. hath set up his rest: has resolved
LADY CAPULET

What is the matter?

NURSE

Look, look! O heavy day!

LADY CAPULET

O me, O me! My child, my only life!
Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!
Help, help! Call help!

Enter CAPULET

CAPULET

For shame, bring Juliet forth. Her Lord is come.

NURSE

She's dead, deceased, she's dead. Alack the day!

LADY CAPULET

Alack the day! She's dead, she's dead, she's dead.

CAPULET

Ha! Let me see her. Out, alas—she's cold!
Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;
Life and these lips have long been separated.

Death lies on her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

NURSE

O lamentable day!

LADY CAPULET

O woeful time!
CAPULET

Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,
Ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.

Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE and PARIS with MUSICIANS

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

CAPULET

Ready to go, but never to return.
O son, the night before thy wedding day
Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,
Flower as she was, deflowered by him.
Death is my son-in-law; Death is my heir.
My daughter he hath wedded. I will die
And leave him all life living. All is Death's.

PARIS

Have I thought long to see this morning's face,
And doth it give me such a sight as this?

LADY CAPULET

Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw
In lasting labor of his pilgrimage. 15
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel Death hath caught it from my sight.

NURSE

O woe, O woeful, woeful, woeful day!
Most lamentable day, most woeful day

15. lasting labor of his pilgrimage: i.e., in all his days
That ever, ever I did yet behold.

O day, O day, O day, O hateful day,
Never was seen so black a day as this:
O woeful day, O woeful day!

PARIS

Beguiled, divorcèd, wrongèd, spited, slain!
Most detestable Death, by thee beguiled,

By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown.
O love, O life; not life, but love in death.

CAPULET

Despised, distressèd, hated, martyred, killed!
Uncomfortable time, why cam'st thou now
To murder, murder our solemnity?

O child, O child, my soul and not my child!
Dead art thou! Alack, my child is dead,
And with my child, my joys are burièd.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Peace, ho! For shame, confusion's cares lies not
In these confusions°. Heaven and yourself

Had part in this fair maid.° Now heaven hath all,
And all the better it is for the maid.
Your part in her, you could not keep from Death,
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
The most you sought was her promotion,

For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced.
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself.
O in this love, you love your child so ill
That you run mad seeing that she is well.

She's not well married that lives married long,

° “yelling; commotion

16. Had part in this fair maid: i.e., were alive in her
But she’s best married that dies married young.
Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary.\(^17\)
On this fair corpse, and, as the custom is,
In all her best array\(^n\) bear her to Church.
For though some nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature’s tears are reason’s merriment.

**CAPULET**
All things that we ordained festival
Turn from their office to black funeral.
Our instruments to melancholy bells,
Our wedding cheer to sad burial feast,
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges\(^s\) change,
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corpse,
And all things change them to the contrary.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
Sir, go you in, and madam, go with him;
And go, sir Paris. Every one prepare
To follow this fair corpse unto her grave.
The heavens do frown upon you for some ill;
Move them no more, by crossing their high will.

*Exit all but NURSE and MUSICIANS*

**FIRST MUSICIAN**
Faith, we may put up our pipes\(^18\) and be gone.

**NURSE**
Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up!
For well you know, this is a pitiful case.

---

\(^{17}\) *rosemary*: the herb was sometimes used in funeral ceremonies

\(^{18}\) *put up our pipes*: Pipe instruments were traditionally used at weddings; “put up” here means “put away.”
FIRST MUSICIAN

Aye, by my troth, the case may be amended.\(^{19}\)

Exit NURSE

Enter PETER

PETER

Musicians, O musicians! “Heart’s Ease,” “Heart’s Ease.”\(^{20}\)

O, an you will have me live, play “Heart’s Ease.”

FIRST MUSICIAN

Why “Heart’s Ease?”

PETER

O musicians, because my heart itself plays “My heart is full of woe.” O play me some merry dump\(^{\prime}\) to comfort me.

FIRST MUSICIAN

Not a dump, no—’tis no time to play now.

PETER

You will not then?

FIRST MUSICIAN

No.

PETER

I will then give it you soundly.

---

19. *the case may be amended:* referring to either the case of Juliet’s death, or his instrument case
20. “Heart’s Ease”: a popular song at the time.
FIRST MUSICIAN
What will you give us?

PETER
No money, on my faith, but the gleek°. I will give° you the minstrel.21

FIRST MUSICIAN
Then will I give you the serving-creature.22

PETER
Then will I lay the serving-creature's daggers on your pate°. I will carry no crochets°; I'll re you, I'll fa you.23 Do you note me?2a musical note

FIRST MUSICIAN
If you re us and you fa us, you'll note us.

SECOND MUSICIAN
Pray you put up your dagger, and put out your wit. Then have at you with my wit.

PETER
I will dry-beat° you with an iron wit and put up my iron dagger. Answer me like men:
[Sings] When griping griefs the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then music with her silver sound—

21. the minstrel: insulting term for “musician”
22. the serving-creature: insulting term for “servant”
23. I'll re you, I'll fa you: Re and fa are both names of musical notes
24. Catling: a string used for instruments
FIRST MUSICIAN

Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

PETER

Prates°! What say you, Hugh Rebeck? a stupid answer

SECONDS MUSICIAN

I say “silver sound” because musicians sound for silver.

PETER

Prates too! What say you, James Sound-Post?

THIRD MUSICIAN

Faith, I know not what to say.

PETER

O, I cry you mercy! You are the singer. I will say for you: It is “music with her silver sound” because musicians have no gold for sounding.

[Sings] Then Music with her silver sound

With speedy help doth lend redress°.

Farewell, fiddlers! Farewell!

Exit PETER

FIRST MUSICIAN

What a pestilent knave is this man!

SECOND MUSICIAN

Hang him, Jack. Come, we’ll in here, tarry for the mourners, and

25. Rebeck: a bowed instrument
26. sound for silver: i.e., make sound for money
27. Sound-Post: a small component used in violins and other similar instruments.
28. cry you mercy: beg your pardon
stay dinner. 29

Exit all

29. *stay dinner*: wait for dinner
ACT 5

ACT 5, SCENE 1

Balthasar, a friend of Romeo’s, brings him news that Juliet is dead and lies in the Capulet tomb. Resolved to find her and join her in death, Romeo first visits an apothecary and bribes him to obtain an illegal (and lethal) poison.

A market street in Mantua:

Enter ROMEO

ROMEO

If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep
My dreams presage\(^1\) some joyful news at hand.
My bosom’s lord\(^1\) sits lightly in his throne:
And all this day an unaccustomed spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead—
Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think—
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips,
That I revived and was an Emperor.

Ah me, how sweet is love itself possessed,\(^2\)
When but love’s shadows\(^6\) are so rich in joy!

Enter ROMEO’s man BALTHASAR

News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?
Dost thou not bring me letters from the Friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How doth my lady Juliet? That I ask again,
For nothing can be ill if she be well.

1. My bosom’s lord: my heart
2. love itself possessed: i.e., love in real life
BALTHASAR

Then she is well and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capel’s monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.

I saw her laid low in her kindred’s vault,
And presently took post to tell it you.
O, pardon me for bringing this ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

ROMEO

Is it e’en so? Then I deny you, stars!
Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and paper,
And hire post horses. I will hence tonight.

BALTHASAR

I do beseech you sir, have patience.
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

ROMEO

Tush, thou art deceived!
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.
Hast thou no letters to me from the Friar?

BALTHASAR

No, my good lord.

ROMEO

No matter; get thee gone.
And hire those horses. I’ll be with thee straight.

Exit BALTHASAR

3. post horses: horses for rent, which were kept at inns
Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.
Let’s see for means.⁴ O mischief, thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
I do remember an apothecary—
And hereabouts he dwells—which late I noted
In tattered weeds° with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples°. Meager were his looks.
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones.
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuffed, and other skins
Of ill-shaped fishes. And about his shelves,
A beggarly° amount of empty boxes:
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses
Were thinly scattered to make up a show.
Noting this penury°, to myself I said,
“An if a man did need a poison now—
Whose sale is present death in Mantua—
Here lives a caitiff° wretch would sell it him.”
O, this same thought did but forerun my need,
And this same needy man must sell it me.
As I remember, this should be the house.
Being holiday, the beggar’s shop is shut.—
What ho, apothecary?”

Enter APOTHECARY

APOTHECARY

¿Who calls so loud?

ROMEO

Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.
Hold, there is forty ducats°. Let me have

⁴ Let’s see for means: i.e., how can I do this?
A dram of poison, such soon-speeding stuff
As will disperse itself through all the veins
That life-weary taker may fall dead,
And that the trunk may be discharged of breath
As violently as hasty powder fired
Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

APOTHECARY

Such mortal drugs I have, but Mantua's law
Is death to any he that utters them.

ROMEO

Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness
And fearest to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,
Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back.
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law.
The world affords no law to make thee rich:
Then be not poor, but break it and take this.

APOTHECARY

My poverty, but not my will, consents.

ROMEO

I pray thy poverty and not thy will.

APOTHECARY gives him the poison

APOTHECARY

Put this in any liquid thing you will
And drink it off, and if you had the strength
Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

ROMEO

There is thy gold: worse poison to men's souls,
Doing more murder in this loathsome world
Than those poor compounds that thou must not sell.
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.
Farewell, buy food, and get thyself in flesh.  

Exit APOTHECARY

Come, cordial° and not poison, go with me
To Juliet’s grave, for there must I use thee.

Exit ROMEO

❖❖❖

ACT 5, SCENE 2

Friar John returns to Friar Lawrence, informing him that his letter could not be delivered to Romeo due to an outbreak of sickness. Aware that Juliet will soon awake, Friar Lawrence heads to the Capulet tomb to retrieve Juliet and keep her safe until Romeo can return.

Friar Lawrence’s cell in Verona:

Enter FRIAR JOHN

FRIAR JOHN

Holy Franciscan Friar, brother, ho?

Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE

FRIAR LAWRENCE

This same should be the voice of Friar John.
Welcome from Mantua! What says Romeo?
Or if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

5. get thyself in flesh: meaning, “get some meat on your bones”
FRIAR JOHN

I went to find a barefoot brother out,  
One of our order, to accompany me,  
Who was in this city visiting the sick,  
And, finding him, the searchers of the town  
Suspected that we both were in a house  
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,  
Sealed up the doors and would not let us forth,  
So that my speed to Mantua there was stayed.  

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Who bare my letter then to Romeo?

FRIAR JOHN

I could not send it—here it is again—  
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,  
So fearful were they of infection.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Unhappy fortune! By my Brotherhood,  
The letter was not nice but full of charge  
Of dear import, and the neglecting it  
May do much danger. Friar John, go hence,  
Get me an iron crow and bring it straight  
Unto my cell.

FRIAR JOHN

Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

Exit FRIAR JOHN

6. “Here in...let us forth”: he was quarantined because the searchers suspected him of having the plague
7. not nice but full of charge: not trivial, but full of important instructions
8. iron crow: an iron rod used as a lever
FRIAR LAWRENCE

Now must I to the Monument° alone.  
Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake.  
She will beshrew me much that Romeo  
Hath had no notice of these accidents.  
But I will write again to Mantua  
And keep her at my cell ‘til Romeo come.  
Poor living corpse, closed in a dead man’s Tomb.

Exit FRIAR LAWRENCE

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ACT 5, SCENE 3

Paris mourns at the Capulet tomb, but hides when he hears someone (Romeo) approaching. As he reaches the tomb, Romeo commands Balthasar to leave; Balthazar leaves but decides to linger secretly. Paris confronts Romeo as he attempts to open the tomb. They fight, and Romeo kills Paris. Romeo enters the tomb and lays Paris inside it. Approaching Juliet, Romeo grieves for her death and the luster of her still-lively beauty. He drinks the poison and dies. Friar Lawrence arrives and witnesses the scene as Juliet wakes, offering to hide her away among a convent of nuns. She refuses. Hearing guards approaching, Juliet kills herself with Romeo's dagger. The Prince, the Capulets, and the Montagues are summoned by the guards. Friar Lawrence summarizes the events leading to this point and is corroborated by Balthazar and Romeo's letter to his father. In remorse, lords Capulet and Montague make peace.

The Churchyard, outside the Capulet Tomb, later moving within the tomb:

Enter PARIS and his PAGE

PARIS

Give me thy torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof°.  
Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.  
Under those young trees, lay thee all along,  
Holding thy ear close to the hollow ground.

9. all along: flat

°Capulet family tomb

°at a distance
So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,
Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,
But thou shalt hear it. Whistle then to me
As signal that thou hearest something approach.
Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee; go!

PAGE

I am almost afraid to stand alone,
Here in the churchyard, yet I will adventure.

PARIS

Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew—
O woe, thy canopy is dust and stones!—
Which with sweet water nightly I will dew,
Or, lacking that, with tears distilled by moans.
The obsequies that I for thee will keep,
Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

The PAGE whistles

The boy gives warning; something doth approach.
What cursed foot wanders this way tonight,
To cross my obsequies and true love's right?
What, with a torch? Muffle me, night, a while.

Enter ROMEO and BALTHASAR

ROMEO

Give me the mattock° and the wrenching iron°.
And take this letter early in the morning;
See thou deliver it to my lord and father.
Give me the light. Upon thy life I charge thee,
Whate'er thou hearest or seest, stand all aloof;
And do not interrupt me in my course.

10. The obsequies that I for thee will keep: i.e., the funeral rites that I will perform for you
Why I descend into this bed of death
Is partly to behold my lady’s face,
But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger
A precious ring, a ring that I must use,
In dear employment; therefore hence, be gone.
But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry,
In what I farther shall intend to do,
By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint,
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs.
The time and my intents are savage, wild,
More fierce and more inexorable far
Than empty tigers, or the roaring sea.

BALTHASAR
I will be gone, sir, and not trouble ye.

ROMEO
In this thou shows me friendship. [hands BALTHASAR money] Take thou that.
Live and be prosperous, and farewell, good fellow!

BALTHASAR and ROMEO part

BALTHASAR
For all this same, I’ll hide me hereabout.
His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.

ROMEO
Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
And in despite, I’ll cram thee with more food!

11. In dear employment: i.e., for important reasons
154 | Romeo and Juliet
PARIS

This is that banished haughty\textsuperscript{a} Montague\textsuperscript{a arrogan}
That murdered my love's cousin, with which grief
It is supposed the fair creature died,
And here is come to do some villainous shame
To the dead bodies. I will apprehend him.

[To ROMEO] Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague!

Can vengeance be pursued further than death?
Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee!
Obey and go with me, for thou must die.

ROMEO

I must indeed, and therefore I came hither.
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,
Fly hence and leave me. Think upon these gone;
Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,
Put not another sin upon my head
By urging me to fury. O, begone!
By heaven, I love thee better than myself,
For I come hither armed against myself.
Stay not: be gone, live, and hereafter say,
A madman's mercy bid thee run away.

PARIS

I do defy thy commiseration,
And apprehend thee for a felon here.

ROMEO

Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

\textit{ROMEO and PARIS fight}

PAGE

O Lord, they fight! I will go call the Watch.

\textit{Exit PAGE}
PARIS

O, I am slain! If thou be mercifull,
Open the tomb; lay me with Juliet.

PARIS dies

ROMEO

In faith, I will. Let me peruse° this face. 

75  Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris! 
What said my man, when my betossèd soul 
Did not attend him as we rode? I think 
He told me Paris should have married Juliet. 
Said he not so? Or did I dream it so? 

Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet, 
To think it was so? O, give me thy hand, 
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book! 
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave. 
A grave? O, no. A lantern, slaughtered youth, 

85  For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes 
This vault a feasting presence full of light. 

ROMEO arranges PARIS in the Capulet tomb

Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interred. 
How oft when men are at the point of death 
Have they felt merry, which their keepers call 

90  A lightning before death. O, how may I 
Call this a lightning? O my love, my wife, 
Death that has sucked the honey of thy breath 
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty. 
Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign° yet 

95  Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks, 
And death's pale flag is not advanced there. 
Tybalt, lie you there in that bloody sheet? 
O, what more favor can I do to thee 
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain° 

100 To sunder° his that was thine enemy? 
Forgive me, cousin. Ah, dear Juliet,
Why are thou yet so fair? I will believe—
Shall I believe—that unsubstantial Death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that I still will stay with thee,
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again, here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chambermaids. O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-weary’d flesh. Eyes, look your last.
Arms, take your last embrace. And lips, O, you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death.

He kisses JULIET

Come, bitter conduct. Come, unsavory guide,
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!
Here’s to my love! O true apothecary,
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss, I die.

ROMEO drinks the poison and dies

Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE with a lantern, crowbar and a spade

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Saint Francis! be my speed! How oft tonight
Have my old feet tripped on gravestones.—Who’s there?

BALTHASAR

Here’s one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

12. unsubstantial Death is amorous: i.e., death is in love with Juliet
13. Saint Francis: the patron saint of Italy
FRIAR LAWRENCE

Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,
What torch is yond that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,
It burns in the Capulets' monument.

BALTHASAR

It does so, holy sir,
And there's my master, one that you love.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Who is it?

BALTHASAR

Romeo.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

How long hath he been there?

BALTHASAR

Full half an hour.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Go with me to the vault.

BALTHASAR

I dare not, sir.
My master knows not but I am gone hence,
And fearfully did menace me with death,
If I did stay to look on his intents.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Stay then, I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me.
O, much I fear some ill unthrifty\textsuperscript{a} thing.

\textbf{BALTHASAR}

As I did sleep under this young tree here,
I dreamt my master and another fought
And that my master slew him.

\emph{Exit BALTHASAR}

\textbf{FRIAR LAWRENCE}

Romeo!

\begin{verbatim}
Alas! Alas! What blood is this which stains
The stony entrance of this sepulcher?\textsuperscript{b}
What mean these masterless and gory swords
To lie discolored by this place of peace?
Romeo! O, pale. Who else? What, Paris too?
And steeped in blood? Ah, what an unkind hour
Is guilty of this lamentable chance?
The lady stirs.
\end{verbatim}

\textbf{JULIET}

O comfortable Friar, where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be.
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

\textbf{FRIAR LAWRENCE}

I hear some noise.—Lady, come from that nest
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep.
A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away,
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead,
And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.
Stay not to question, for the Watch is coming.
Come, go, good Juliet. I dare no longer stay.
Exit FRIAR LAWRENCE

JULIET

165 Go get thee hence, for I will not away.
What's here? A cup closed in my true love’s hand?
Poison I see has been his timeless end!
O churl°, drank all and left no friendly drop
To help me after! I will kiss thy lips.

170 Happ'ly some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative.

She kisses ROMEO

Thy lips are warm.

Enter PAGE and WATCH

WATCHMAN 1

Lead, boy! Which way?

JULIET

Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger,

175 This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die.

JULIET stabs herself and dies

PAGE

This is the place, there where the torch doth burn.

CHIEF WATCHMAN

The ground is bloody! Search about the churchyard.
Go, some of you; whoe'er you find, arrest.
Pitiful sight! Here lies the County slain,

180 And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,
Who here hath lain these two days burièd.
Go tell the Prince. Run to the Capulets.
Raise up the Montagues. Some others search.
We see the ground whereon these woes do lie,
But the true ground of all these piteous woes
We cannot without circumstance descry°.

Enter 2nd WATCHMAN escorting BALTHASAR

2nd WATCHMAN
Here’s Romeo’s man; we found him in the churchyard.

CHIEF WATCHMAN
Hold him in safety ‘til the Prince comes hither.

Enter 3rd WATCHMAN escorting FRIAR LAWRENCE

3rd WATCHMAN
Here is a Friar that trembles, sighs, and weeps.
We took this mattock and spade from him
As he was coming from this churchyard’s side.

CHIEF WATCHMAN
A great suspicion! Stay the Friar too.

Enter PRINCE

PRINCE
What misadventure is so early up
That calls our person from our morning rest?

Enter CAPULET and LADY CAPULET

CAPULET
What could it be that they so shrieked abroad?

LADY CAPULET
O, the people in the street cry “Romeo,”
Some “Juliet,” and some “Paris,” and all run
With open outcry toward our monument.

PRINCE
What fear is this which startles in our ears?

CHIEF WATCHMAN
Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain,
And Romeo dead, and Juliet, dead before,
Warm and new killed.

PRINCE
Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.

CHIEF WATCHMAN
Here is a Friar, and slaughtered Romeo’s man,
With instruments upon them fit to open
These dead men’s tombs.

CAPULET
O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!
This dagger hath mista’en, for lo, his house
Is empty on the back of Montague
And is mis-sheathed in my daughter’s bosom.

LADY CAPULET
O me, this sight of death is as a bell
That warns my old age to a sepulcher.

Enter MONTAGUE

14. his house: the dagger’s sheath
15. That warns my old age to a sepulcher: i.e., makes her feel old
PRINCE
Come, Montague, for thou art early up
To see thy son and heir, now early down.

MONTAGUE
215 Alas, my liege, my wife is dead tonight!
Grief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath.
What further woe conspires against mine age?

PRINCE
Look and thou shalt see.

MONTAGUE
[To ROMEO] Oh, thou untaught°! What manners is this
To press° before thy father to a grave?

PRINCE
Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,
‘Til we can clear these ambiguities
And know their spring°, their head, their true descent;
And then will I be general of your woes
And lead you even to death. 16 Meantime, forebear,
And let mischance be slave to patience. 17
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected as the time and place
230 Doth make° against me of this direful murder.
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge,
Myself condemned and myself excused.

16. And lead you even to death: i.e., be your leader in grief
17. let mischance be slave to patience: i.e., let patience guide your misfortune
18. make: give evidence
PRINCE

Then say at once what thou dost know in this!

FRIAR LAWRENCE

I will be brief, for my short date of breath

235 Is not so long as is this tedious tale.
Romeo there, dead, was husband to that Juliet,
And she, there dead, that's Romeo's faithful wife.
I married them, and their stol'n marriage day
Was Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death

240 Banished the new-made bridegroom from this city,
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.
You, to remove that siege of grief from her
Betrothed and would have married her perforce*

To County Paris. Then comes she to me,

245 And with wild looks bid me devise some means
To rid her from this second marriage,
Or in my cell there would she kill herself.
Then gave I her, so tutored by my art,
A sleeping potion, which so took effect,

250 As I intended, for it wrought on her
The form of death. Meantime I wrote to Romeo
That he should hither come as this dire night
To help to take her from the borrowed grave
Being the time the potion's force should cease.

255 But he which bore my letter, Friar John,
Was stayed by accident, and yesternight
Returned my letter back. Then all alone
At the prefixed hour of her waking
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault,

260 Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,
‘Til I conveniently could send to Romeo.
But when I came some minute ere the time
Of her awakening, here untimely lay
The noble Paris, and true Romeo, dead.

265 She wakes, and I entreated her come forth
And bear this work of heaven$^{19}$ with patience.
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb,
And she, too desperate, would not go with me
But as it seems, did violence on herself.

All this I know, and to the marriage her Nurse is privy.
And if aught in this miscarried by my fault,$^{20}$
Let my old life be sacrificed some hour before his time
Unto the rigor of severest law.

PRINCE

We still have known thee for a holy man.

Where's Romeo's man? What can he say to this?

BALTHASAR

I brought my master news of Juliet’s death,
And then in post$^{5}$ he came from Mantua,
To this same place, to this same monument.
This letter he early bid me give his father,
And threatened me with death, going in the vault,
If I departed not, and left him there.

PRINCE

Give me the letter; I will look on it.

Where is the County’s page that raised the Watch?
Sirrah, what made your master$^{21}$ in this place?

PAGE

He came with flowers to strew his lady’s grave,
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did.
Anon comes one with light to ope$^{6}$ the tomb,
And, by and by, my master drew on him,

19. *this work of heaven*: i.e., this tragedy
20. *if aught in this miscarried by my fault*: i.e., if anything in this was my fault
21. *what made your master*: i.e., what was he doing?
And then I ran away to call the Watch.

PRINCE

290  [reading letter] This letter doth make good the Friar's words.
     Their course of love, the tidings of her death;
     And here he writes that he did buy a poison
     Of a poor apothecary, and there with it
     Came to this vault to die and lie with Juliet.

295  Where be these enemies? Capulet? Montague?
     See what a scourge is laid upon your hate
     That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
     And I, for winking at your discords, too
     Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished.

CAPULET

300  O brother Montague, give me thy hand.
     This is my daughter's jointure°, for no more
     Can I demand.

MONTAGUE

     But I can give thee more,
     For I will raise her statue in pure gold

305  That whiles Verona by that name is known,°
     There shall be no figure at such rate be set°
     As that of true and faithful Juliet.

CAPULET

     As rich shall Romeo's° by his lady's lie,
     Poor sacrifices for our enmity.

---

22. winking at your discords: turning a blind eye
23. whiles Verona by that name is known: while Verona is called Verona
24. Romeo's: meaning Romeo's statue
PRINCE

310 A glooming peace this morning with it brings.
    The sun for sorrow shall not show his head.
    Go hence to have more talk of these sad things.
    Some shall be pardoned, and some punishèd.
    For never was a story of more woe

315 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Exit all
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