

THE ANNOTATED SHAKESPEARE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Romeo and Juliet



FULLY ANNOTATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY BURTON RAFFEL

WITH AN ESSAY BY HAROLD BLOOM

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Burton Raffel, General Editor

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For my own Juliet: Elizabeth

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ABOUT THIS BOOK



Written four centuries ago, in a fairly early form of Modern English, *Romeo and Juliet* is a gorgeously passionate, witty, and complex text. Many of the play's social and historical underpinnings necessarily need, for the modern reader, the kinds of explanation offered in the Introduction. But what needs even more, and far more detailed, explanation are the play's very words. Toward the end of act 1, scene 1, Romeo and his loyal friend, Benvolio (the name means, in Italian, "well loved," just as Romeo's name, in Italian, means "pilgrim"), spar wittily about the nature of love:

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

Romeo Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,
Should without eyes see pathways to his will.
(lines 78–81)

For comprehension of these lines—completely typical of the play's language—the modern reader needs help. In Benvolio's two lines,

gentle = courteous, noble

in his view = in his [Cupid's] appearance ("his" frequently means "its")

rough = disagreeable, harsh

in proof = how it turns out/is experienced.

And in Romeo's two lines,

view is muffled still = whose sight is forever/always blinded
without eyes: Cupid is blind

his will = his pleasure, desire.

The modern reader or listener of course will better understand this brief exchange in context, as the drama unfolds. But without full explanation of words that have over the years shifted in meaning, neither the modern reader nor the modern listener is likely to be equipped for full comprehension.

I believe annotations of this sort create the necessary bridges, from Shakespeare's four-centuries-old English across to ours. The only "difficult" words I have not explained in this brief passage are "tyrannous" and "pathways"; the omissions are deliberate. Many readers new to matters Elizabethan will already understand these still current, and largely unchanged, words. Some readers, to be sure, will be able to comprehend unusual, historically different meanings without glosses. But when it comes to words like "tyrannous" and "pathways," those who are not familiar with the modern meaning will easily find clear, simple definitions in any modern dictionary. And they may be obliged to make fairly frequent use of such a dictionary: there are a good many less familiar words, in *Romeo and Juliet*, to be found in modern dictionaries

and not glossed here. Yet most readers are not likely to understand Shakespeare's intended meaning, absent such glosses as I here offer. I have followed the same principles in *The Annotated Milton*, published in 1999, and in my annotated edition of *Hamlet*, published (as the initial volume in this series) in 2003. Classroom experience has validated these editions. Classes of mixed upper-level undergraduates and graduate students have more quickly and thoroughly transcended language barriers than ever before. This allows the teacher, or a general reader without a teacher, to move more promptly and confidently to the non-linguistic matters that have made Shakespeare and Milton great and important poets.

It is the inevitable forces of linguistic change, operant in all living tongues, which have inevitably created such wide degrees of obstacles to ready comprehension—not only sharply different meanings, but subtle, partial shifts in meaning that allow us to think we understand when, alas, we do not. Speakers of related languages like Dutch and German also experience this shifting of the linguistic ground. Like early Modern English (ca. 1600) and the Modern English now current, those languages are too close for those who know only one language, and not the other, to be readily able always to recognize what they correctly understand and what they do not. When, for example, a speaker of Dutch says, “Men kofer is kapot,” a speaker of German will know that something belonging to the Dutchman is broken (“kapot” = “kaputt” in German, and “men” = “mein”). But without more linguistic awareness than the average person is apt to have, the German speaker will not identify “kofer” (“trunk” in Dutch) with “Körper”—a modern German word meaning “physique, build, body.” The closest word to “kofer” in modern German,

indeed, is “Scrankkoffer,” which is too large a leap for ready comprehension. Speakers of different Romance languages (such as French, Spanish, or Italian), and all other related but not identical tongues, all experience these difficulties, as well as the difficulty of understanding a text written in their own language five, or six, or seven hundred years earlier. Shakespeare’s English is not yet so old that it requires, like many historical texts in French and German, or like Old English texts—for example, *Beowulf*—a modern translation. Much poetry evaporates in translation: language is immensely particular. The sheer sound of Dante in thirteenth-century Italian is profoundly worth preserving. So too is the sound of Shakespeare.

I have annotated prosody (metrics) only when it seemed truly necessary or particularly helpful. Readers should have no problem with the silent “e”: whenever an “e” is not silent, it is marked “è”. The notation used for prosody, which is also used in the explanation of Elizabethan pronunciation, follows the extremely simple form of my *From Stress to Stress: An Autobiography of English Prosody* (see “Further Reading,” near the end of this book). Syllables with metrical stress are capitalized; all other syllables are in lowercase letters. I have managed to employ normal Elizabethan spellings, in most indications of pronunciation, but I have sometimes been obliged to deviate, in the higher interest of being understood.

I have annotated, as well, a limited number of such other matters, sometimes of interpretation, sometimes of general or historical relevance, as have seemed to me seriously worthy of inclusion. These annotations have been most carefully restricted: this is not intended to be a book of literary commentary. It is for that reason that the glossing of metaphors has been severely restricted.

There is almost literally no end to discussion and/or analysis of metaphor, especially in Shakespeare. To yield to temptation might well be to double or triple the size of this book—and would also change it from a historically oriented language guide to a work of an unsteadily mixed nature. In the process, I believe, neither language nor literature would be well or clearly served.

Where it seemed useful, and not obstructive of important textual matters, I have modernized spelling, including capitalization. I have frequently repunctuated. Since the original printed texts of *Romeo and Juliet* (there not being, as there never are for Shakespeare, surviving manuscripts) are frequently careless as well as self-contradictory, I have been relatively free with the wording of stage directions – and in some cases have added small directions, to indicate who is speaking to whom. I have made no emendations; I have necessarily been obliged to make choices. Textual decisions have been annotated when the differences between or among the original printed texts seem either marked or of unusual interest.

In the interests of compactness and brevity, I have employed in my annotations (as consistently as I am able) a number of stylistic and typographical devices:

- The annotation of a single word does not repeat that word
- The annotation of more than one word repeats the words being annotated, which are followed by an equals sign and then by the annotation; the footnote number in the text is placed after the last of the words being annotated
- In annotations of a single word, alternate meanings are usually separated by commas; if there are distinctly different ranges of meaning, the annotations are separated by arabic numerals

inside parentheses—(1), (2), and so on; in more complexly worded annotations, alternative meanings expressed by a single word are linked by a forward slash, or solidus: /

- Explanations of textual meaning are not in parentheses; comments about textual meaning are
- Except for proper nouns, the word at the beginning of all annotations is in lower case
- Uncertainties are followed by a question mark, set in parentheses: (?)
- When particularly relevant, “translations” into twenty-first-century English have been added, in parentheses
- Annotations of repeated words are not repeated. Explanations of the first instance of such common words are followed by the sign★. Readers may easily track down the first annotation, using the brief Finding List at the back of the book. Words with entirely separate meanings are annotated only for meanings no longer current in Modern English.

The most important typographical device here employed is the sign ★ placed after the first (and only) annotation of words and phrases occurring more than once. There is an alphabetically arranged listing of such words and phrases in the Finding List at the back of the book. The Finding List contains no annotations but simply gives the words or phrases themselves and the numbers of the relevant act, the scene within that act, and the footnote number within that scene for the word’s first occurrence.

INTRODUCTION



A far more complex drama than it is sometimes thought, *Romeo and Juliet* (1595?) takes its basic story line from Arthur Brooke's long narrative poem, *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562). Shakespeare could not have taken much else: Brooke's poem is written in one of the dullest verse forms in English literary history, Poulter's Measure, being rhymed couplets of alternating hexameter and septameter length. The *Tragical History* makes soporific reading. Yet the source of a plot is no more than a beginning; Shakespeare almost invariably worked from borrowed plots. He could have taken this story line from a good many other sources, for many were readily available; there is convincing evidence, however, that he worked from Brooke alone. Again, what matters most, and what I will discuss here, is what Shakespeare did with his ready-made narrative.

Romeo and Juliet is, first of all, one of the central texts in the long history of Western love stories. How and why one person falls in love with another is obviously, and properly, of primary human concern. Nobel Prize-winner Isaac Bashevis Singer often said that all stories are love stories. "The universal novel of creation," he wrote in *Gifts*, at age eighty-one, "is finally a love story."

And “Romeo” has long since come to mean, in our language, a lover, as well as someone persistently preoccupied with loving.

It is a mistake to believe either that Shakespeare’s Romeo is excessively passionate or that he and Juliet are in some way recklessly immature and unthinking. Renaissance (and to a large extent later medieval) approaches to love were founded on two bodily organs, neither of them the brain. The eyes were thought to begin the process. Sight was indeed indispensable, and sight, like the wind and the rain, happens to be a physically based occurrence over which humans have no control. But the eyes alone could not create love. The eyes transmitted the image they saw, automatically and without any notion of preconception or planning, straight into the organs of emotion. Stirred by such a physical impact, the recipient’s heart and soul were inevitably and irreversibly bound by that wry, sly, and even malevolent god Love, who was identified with the bow-wielding blind imp, Cupid.

In more physiological terms than the Renaissance usually employed: it was image-carrying light beams that, like Cupid’s arrows, were shot into receiving—and to be sure receptive—eyes. These light beams traveled directly and without interruption down into the inner, affective seats of being. (One must fudge a bit, here, since it had not yet been fully settled that the heart was uniquely the center of such matters; the liver and sometimes also the kidneys were still considered relevant.) The many light-oriented metaphors used, first and last, to depict the heroine of Romeo and Juliet fairly leap out at us; their ideational underpinning is a good deal less obvious. It is still less obvious that Juliet, too, sometimes uses light-related metaphors in speaking of Romeo and of their love. Their love, she says, is “Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be / Ere one can say ‘It lightens’”

(2.2.119–120). When the Nurse is late returning from her message-bearing visit to Romeo, Juliet declares, “Love’s heralds should be thoughts, / Which ten times faster glide than the sun’s beams” (2.5.4–5). It is entirely fitting, to be sure, that her love is not depicted in precisely the same terms as his. She can be his sun, moon, and stars, but an Elizabethan woman views her beloved as her “lord.” Juliet is crisp and direct, for a Renaissance woman (though no more straightforward than many of Shakespeare’s female characters—think of Desdemona, Portia, Cordelia, and the often misunderstood Ophelia). She apologizes to Romeo for her forwardness. Romeo is reverential, gentle, respectful. But he does not apologize for his sweeping passion.

If, as often happens, the lover did not have the same powerful effect on his or her beloved, love was unilateral and largely unsatisfiable. What factors made for receptivity were left vague and largely undiscussed. Love happened, or it did not. The party or parties involved knew with great clarity what they knew, once they had been stricken; nothing else counted. Like so many developments in human existence, life’s directions were subject to unknowable forces—destiny, fate, or astrological configurations. Rebellion against such outwardly determined directions was always possible. But not successful: fatalism was not simply another way of looking at life but a recognition of fundamental reality.

Far from being wantons, accordingly, Romeo and Juliet were fortunate to find one another, just as they were unfortunate in other ways. Rosaline—Romeo’s unseen, unheard, but often referred to—initial beloved, was to the Renaissance mind someone our hero plainly loved only conceptually, intellectually. That sort of “love” was not and could not be genuine, profound, and soul shaking. Nor was it generally reciprocated. It was a mere game.

People did not trifle or toy with Cupid's unstoppable arrows. They bled from them, which is a very different affair entirely. Love was not to be casually identified with mere happiness.

The comparative youth of Romeo and, especially, of Juliet is yet another non-issue. Count Paris appears to be younger than Romeo, and to my knowledge, no one has ever suggested that his unreciprocated but apparently genuine love for Juliet is in any way immature. The critical focus is of course largely on Juliet, who is not quite fourteen. But not only do human females mature biologically at a much more rapid pace than do human males, they also mature emotionally at roughly corresponding speed. Wives have always tended to be younger than husbands; legal limits on marriageable age (a relatively recent development) tend to recognize and enforce custom. In the southern states of the United States, not so long ago, males were permitted to marry at sixteen, females at fourteen. It is generally accepted that maturation accelerates in warmer climates—and Shakespeare's play is set in Italy. Indeed, Mary Queen of Scots had been married at fifteen. For a marriage to be permissible, in England at that time, the minimal age was "at least 14 for a boy and 12 for a girl."¹ Throughout Europe, indeed, "girls could be betrothed at the age of three, though marriage had to be delayed till twelve. In the fifteenth century a daughter unmarried at fifteen was a family disgrace."²

Yet Romeo and Juliet's misfortunes are not caused exclusively by dark, mysterious, and unfathomable powers. Lawrence Stone's analysis of these lovers' downfall does not fully explain the play, but it does highlight a social vector that we in our time often neglect: "To an Elizabethan audience the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet . . . lay not so much in their ill-starred romance as in the

way they brought destruction upon themselves by violating the norms of the society in which they lived, which . . . meant strict filial obedience and loyalty to the traditional friendships and enmities of the lineage. An Elizabethan courtier would be familiar enough with the bewitching passion of love to feel some sympathy with the young couple, but he would see clearly enough where duty lay.”³ We may say with equal justice that the “norms” of the society in which these lovers lived, which tolerated (even if they did not encourage) deep and dangerous feuds, brought destruction and death to many more than Romeo and Juliet alone. In the course of the tragedy, Mercutio, Tybalt, and Paris die for exactly the same flawed cause.

Not only is it clear that the Capulets and the Montagues are at fault, but we are given satiric, barbed portraits of the leaders of both families. They are very old, but not remarkably wise, for all their great years. “What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!” croaks old Capulet in act 1, scene 1 (line 83). To which senile bravado his wife responds, “A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?” Capulet persists, seeing old Montague coming, and—to Capulet’s mind—“flourish[ing] his blade in spite of me.” Montague is no wiser or more mature. “Thou villain Capulet!” he cries, and then, when his wife too attempts to restrain him, he exclaims, “Hold me not, let me go.” Lady Montague, womanly more sensible, asserts, “Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.”

In the course of the play, we see more of old Capulet than we do of old Montague, and what we see usually fits the same intemperate, often befuddled initial portrait. Capulet is more mellow, at first, in act 1, scene 5, even urging calm and tolerance on Tybalt. But when Tybalt argues with him, Capulet sputters out an explosively irrational tirade, mixing his invective with staccato com-

ments on and to the dancing guests (lines 76–81, 82–88). Capulet’s denunciation of his daughter for refusing to honor her father’s plans for her marriage is neither tempered nor sagacious: “Out, you green sickness carrion! Out, you baggage! . . . An you be mine, I’ll give you to my friend— / An you be not, hang! Beg! Starve! Die in the streets!” (3.5.156, 192–193). And in act 4, scene 4, just before the discovery of Juliet’s “death,” Capulet plays the role of an excited, dithering old fellow, far too caught up to display even minimal dignity. “A jealous hood, a jealous hood!” he cackles at his wife, when she assures him that his errant nocturnal amours are over and done with (line 13).

A more trenchant argument based on the prevailing social norms as Shakespeare has chosen to present them would be, in fact, that the upper levels of Verona society are not only at fault but badly in need of reformation. “Capulet, Montague,” says the prince, plainly including himself and his reign in the castigation. “See what a scourge is laid upon your hate . . . / And I, for winking at your discords too, / Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished” (5.3.291–294). Verona’s citizenry is literally up in arms against violent brawling in its streets. “Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!” (1.1.83). “As much as the deaths of Juliet and her Romeo, so young and so alive,” emphasizes Rosalie L. Colie, “the waste of a man like Mercutio cries out for civil settlement of the old men’s vendetta.”⁴

But the citizenry was not against the wearing of swords by all males of the upper levels (“gentlemen”), nor against the chivalric codes by which fighting among those gentlemen was more or less regulated. Neither, at least in *Romeo and Juliet*, does Shakespeare appear so disposed. Tybalt, negatively portrayed, is trigger-happy, but Mercutio, not far behind in violence and aggression, is pre-

sented with magical warmth. So, too, is Romeo, who takes swift and successful revenge on Tybalt, for Mercutio's death, and who reluctantly but efficiently disposes of an angry and violence-hungry Paris. It must be remembered that one of Shakespeare's most important dramatist colleagues, Ben Jonson, wore and on occasion used a sword to settle a quarrel, once killing his antagonist. Jonson claimed gentlemanly status, though in all probability falsely. Another major English dramatist, Christopher Marlowe, was stabbed to death in a tavern brawl, the rights and wrongs of which have never been decisively determined: Marlowe's death may well have been a political assassination. But Marlowe was a university graduate, and thus of undoubted gentlemanly rank. John Day, a distinctly minor playwright but also a university graduate, killed the obscure playwright Henry Porter with his rapier. Shakespeare had no gentlemanly background, but he spent years trying, finally successfully, to obtain (for a price) a gentleman's coat of arms. He was also, on the record, very much occupied with attaining landowner status, yet another gentlemanly attribute.

In short, social hierarchies—which to this day play a large role in Britain—were in Shakespeare's time starkly powerful. "The key symbols of Tudor and Early Stuart society were the hat [which the lower classes had to doff to their betters] and the whip [which the upper classes were entitled to use on their inferiors]. . . . There was even Tudor class legislation about sport, archery being prescribed for the lower orders, and bowls and tennis restricted to gentlemen with an income of over 100 [pounds] a year."⁵ The masters commanded; the servants obeyed. "Get me ink and paper / And hire post horses," Romeo orders. His servant, Balthasar, demurs. "I do beseech you, sir, have patience." A

wiser servant can thus make what seem to him or her useful suggestions. Romeo pays no heed: "Leave me and do the thing I bid thee do . . . Get thee gone" (5.1.25–27, 30, 32). And Balthasar goes, without another word.

One measure of the Nurse's partially ambivalent class status is precisely the impertinence displayed toward her by her servant, Peter. She does indeed have a servant, which is usually a lady's prerogative, but the Nurse's servant talks back, most casually. "I saw no man use you at his pleasure" (2.4.146). Paris neither expects nor receives such flippancies from his servant. "Give me thy torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof" (5.3.1). Nor does Romeo indulge his manservant, especially when he is grimly serious. "If thou . . . do return to pry . . .," he warns Balthasar, "By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint" (5.3.33–35). We may perhaps doubt, from our twenty-first-century perspective, that Romeo would so assault his servant. But Balthasar quite rightly has no such doubts, knowing that aroused masters could and did do exactly such mayhem. "I dare not," Balthasar tells Friar Laurence, who has requested his companionship in entering the tomb. "My master knows not but I am gone hence, / and fearfully did menace me with death / If I did stay" (5.3.131–134). Not even priestly protection and shielding can persuade him to the contrary. Indeed, one sure sign of the buffoon stature of Petruchio, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, is precisely that, talked back to by a servant, he does not use his sword or his dagger but first argues with the servant, at some length, then performs the commanded act himself, and at last "wrings [the wonderfully insouciant servant] by the ears." The servant cries out for help, as no ordinary servant would even think of doing, and even less typically announces that "My master is mad"—that is, insane (1.2.5–17). It was not then considered a mad act for

masters to behave with great violence to their servants. Patricia Fumerton points out that “much evidence points to unsettling relations between servants . . . and their masters. . . . [A]s court records testify, mistreatment and violence . . . were common.”⁶ Sir William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, written almost two centuries after *Romeo and Juliet*, contains a discussion of “assaults committed by masters and mistresses on apprentice and servants . . . , so as to endanger life, or permanently injure health.” Parents in Renaissance times had absolute rights over their children, and “there were similarities between the position of servants in the household and that of children in the family. . . . Both owed obedience and service to the head of the household.” It is generally speaking true that the sixteenth century saw “the ultimately successful assertion of a royal monopoly of violence both public and private.” But it is also true that “In the sixteenth and seventeenth century tempers were short and weapons to hand. . . . [A] gentleman carried a weapon at all times, and did not hesitate to use it. It was none other than Philip Sidney who warned his father’s secretary that if he read his letters to his father again “I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust to it, for I speak it in earnest.”⁸

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, himself a good poet and the older brother of a great one, George Herbert, writes unashamedly in his autobiography that, in January 1609, a ship on which he was returning from France began to break apart. A boat, a “shalop,” set off from Dover: “I got into it first with my sword in my hand, and called for Sir Thomas Lucy [the only other man of rank on board], saying that if any man offer’d to get in before him, I should resist him with my sword . . . [A]fter I had receiv’d [Lucy], [I] bid the Shalop make away to shoar.”⁹

Rapiers, dueling, sword masters, and sword-fighting treatises were usually Italian imports, as Shakespeare of course well knew. It was all something of an Elizabethan craze. And as A. L. Rowse notes, it is socially significant “that the duel now vindicated, not loyalty or the law, but ‘personal honour, pride, or vanity.’”¹⁰ Even the dinner table could be a source of serious violence, for it was a sobering fact needing to be reckoned with that literally everyone ate by impaling food on knives, usually sharp ones that diners brought to the table themselves. Forks, which were the replacement for knives, were an Italian invention that did not come into use, in England, until 1611.¹¹

Violence-loving aristocrats, from the sober and imperious Duke to the dancers at Capulet’s festive ball, are plainly at the center of *Romeo and Juliet*. But as he so often does, Shakespeare brings onto his stage a good many representatives of Renaissance England’s lower classes, and not simply as traditionally “low,” or comic, characters. Even Sampson and Gregory, two of the “heartless hinds” at whom Tybalt sneers (1.1.75), are a good deal more than mere buffoons. All Elizabethans relished quick wits and nimble tongues; these two members of the serving classes demonstrate both—and their punning jests quickly turn, as male prattle has always done, to matters bawdy. “I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague’s,” says Sampson, adding that “women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall” (1.1.24–25, 28–29). And in the broader senses of the phrase, these two keep their wits about them: “Fear me not,” says Sampson, assuring Gregory of his support. And Gregory, knowing his companion only too well, at once replies, “No, marry,” as far as your support goes, “I fear thee!” (lines 47–48). The nameless and illiterate servant sent as a messenger, bearing invitations to a written list of

persons, shows more good sense than Capulet, who dispatches him (and to whose order any lowbred protest would plainly be risky): “Find them out whose names are written here? It is written that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil and the painter with his nets, 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” (1.2.38–42).

Still, it is only Juliet’s Nurse, among the play’s servants, whose role assumes major proportions. Having spent all fourteen of Juliet’s years in relatively intimate association with the Capulet family, she has taken on a status poised somewhere between aristocratic and plebian. It is the Nurse to whom Lady Capulet hands the keys to locked store rooms—keys necessarily denied to mere servants, since locking such doors is expressly intended, and perfectly understood by everyone, to keep servants from stealing (4.4.1). It is the Nurse who is admitted to Lady Capulet’s “counsel” with her daughter (1.3.9); the Nurse who, told by Lady Capulet to “hold thy peace,” continues to ramble on (line 49); the Nurse who has the temerity, not only to scold her master for his usage of Juliet, but to protest his demeaning reply: “I speak no treason. . . . May one not speak?” (3.5.172, 173). And perhaps most impressively, it is the Nurse who participates essentially as an equal in the quasi-choral dirge spoken for Juliet by Capulet, Lady Capulet, and Paris (4.5.22–64).

Romeo and Juliet was, in the words of our time, a smash hit. “All the young men quoted it,” observes Muriel Bradbrook.¹² It has remained a smash hit: no one, I think, has explained that fact so well as Mark Van Doren: “Few other plays, even by Shakespeare, engage the audience so intimately. . . . The tension of the entire

play, while we await the kiss of fire and powder which will consume its most precious persons, is maintained at an endurable point by the simplicity with which sorrow is made lyric. Even the conceits [‘metaphors’] of Romeo and Juliet sound like things that they and they alone would say. . . . [W]ith a correct and powerful understanding of the surrendered heart, the listening mind . . . [Shakespeare] spares nothing yet handles gently.”¹³

The purpose of this book is to make *Romeo and Juliet’s* glowing words as readily accessible as if they had just been written.

Notes

1. David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 311.
2. Will Durant, *The Renaissance* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 578.
3. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper, 1977), 87.
4. Rosalie L. Colie, *Shakespeare’s Living Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 23.
5. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641*, abridged ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 20, 18.
6. “London’s Vagrant Economy,” in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowan Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 211.
7. Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe, 1500–1700* (London: Hodder, 1998), 71–72.
8. Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 20, 18, 97, 108.
9. *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Written by Himself*, ed. J. M. Shuttleworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 51.
10. A. L. Rowse, *The Elizabethan Renaissance: The Life of the Society* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 197.

INTRODUCTION

11. Margaret Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 186, 190.
12. Muriel Bradbrook, *Shakespeare: The Poet in His World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 99.
13. Mark Van Doren, *Shakespeare* (New York: Holt, 1939), 59–60.

Romeo and Juliet



CHARACTERS (DRAMATIS PERSONAE)

Chorus

Escalus (Prince of Verona)

Paris (a young Count, the Prince's kinsman)

Montague and *Capulet* (heads of two feuding families)

An older, unnamed Capulet

Romeo (Montague's son)

Tybalt (Lady Capulet's nephew)

Mercutio (the Prince's kinsman and Romeo's friend)

Benvolio (Montague's nephew and Romeo's friend)

Friar Laurence (a Franciscan monk)

Friar John (a Franciscan monk)

Balthasar (Romeo's servant)

Abram (Montague's servant)

Sampson (Capulet's servant)

Gregory (Capulet's servant)

Peter (servant of Juliet's Nurse)

An Apothecary

Three Musicians

Three Watchmen

An Officer

Lady Montague (Montague's wife)

Lady Capulet (Capulet's wife)

Juliet (Capulet's daughter)

Juliet's Nurse

Citizens of Verona, Gentlemen and Gentlewomen of both houses,

Masks,¹ Torchbearers, Pages, Guards, Servants, and Attendants

¹ persons disguised by a mask

Act I



PROLOGUE

ENTER CHORUS¹

Chorus Two households, both alike in dignity,²
In fair³ Verona, where we lay our scene,⁴
From ancient grudge⁵ break to new mutiny,⁶
Where civil⁷ blood makes civil⁸ hands unclean.⁹
From forth¹⁰ the fatal¹¹ loins of these two foes¹² 5
A pair of star-crossed¹³ lovers take¹⁴ their life,

1 a single actor, representing/speaking for the entire troupe of actors

2 rank, nobleness, merit

3 beautiful, pleasing, delightful*

4 lay our scene = place/set our play

5 ill will

6 break to new mutiny = burst into new discord/quarrel

7 communal

8 (1) communal, (2) becoming, proper, decent

9 impure, foul

10 from forth = out of

11 fated, doomed

12 the Capulets and the Montagues

13 star-crossed = subject to malignant astrological influence

14 receive, obtain

Whose misadventured¹⁵ piteous overthrows¹⁶
 Doth with their death bury¹⁷ their parents' strife.
 The fearful¹⁸ passage¹⁹ of their death-marked love,
 10 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
 Which, but²⁰ their children's end, naught²¹ could remove,
 Is now the two hours' traffic²² of our stage,
 The which if you with patient ears attend,²³
 What here shall miss,²⁴ our toil shall strive to mend.

EXIT

SCENE I

Verona. A public place

ENTER SAMPSON AND GREGORY, BOTH CAPULETS

15 *Sampson* Gregory, on my word, we'll not carry²⁵ coals.²⁶
Gregory No, for then we should be colliers.²⁷
Sampson I mean, an²⁸ we be in choler, we'll draw.²⁹

15 unfortunate

16 ruin, destruction (noun)

17 (1) inter, (2) abandon

18 dreadful, terrible, awful*

19 movement, course, progression, path

20 except for

21 nothing*

22 business

23 listen, consider, follow closely*

24 be lacking

25 submit to

26 insults (thrown like lumps of coals)

27 (1) dealers in/transporters of coal, (2) angry, wrathful ("choler"), (3) wearing dog- or prison-collars, and (4) the hangman's noose (neck collar)

28 if*

29 pull a sword from its sheath*

- Gregory* Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.
- Sampson* I strike quickly, being moved.³⁰
- Gregory* But thou art not quickly moved to strike. 20
- Sampson* A dog³¹ of the house³² of Montague moves me.
- Gregory* To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand.³³
Therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away.
- Sampson* A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will take
the wall³⁴ of any man or maid of Montague's. 25
- Gregory* That shows thee a weak slave,³⁵ for the weakest goes
to the wall.³⁶
- Sampson* 'Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker
vessels,³⁷ are ever³⁸ thrust to the wall.³⁹ Therefore I will push
Montague's men from the wall and thrust his maids⁴⁰ to the 30
wall.
- Gregory* The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.
- Sampson* 'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have
fought with the men, I will be civil⁴¹ with the maids: I will
cut off their heads. 35
- Gregory* The heads of the maids?
- Sampson* Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads.⁴²

30 provoked, stirred up, angered*

31 a dog = a worthless/despicable person, coward

32 household

33 (1) remain firm/steadfast, (2) have an erection

34 take the wall = keep one's place on the inner side of a walkway/pavement

35 rascal, fellow* (always negative)

36 succumbs, is defeated

37 weaker vessels = having less strength/capacity than men

38 always*

39 thrust to the wall = (1) defeated, (2) copulated with, against a wall

40 (1) women servants, (2) virgins

41 kind, courteous

42 virginity (the hymen/virginal membrane)

Take it in what sense⁴³ thou wilt.

Gregory They must take it in sense that feel it.

40 *Sampson* Me they shall feel, while I am able to stand⁴⁴ – and 'tis
known I am a pretty piece of flesh.⁴⁵

Gregory 'Tis well thou art not fish. If thou hadst,⁴⁶ thou hadst
been poor John.⁴⁷ Draw thy tool!⁴⁸ Here comes two of the
house of Montagues.⁴⁹

ENTER TWO OTHER SERVINGMEN, ABRAM AND BALTHASAR

45 *Sampson* My naked weapon is out.⁵⁰ Quarrel! I will back thee.

Gregory How? Turn thy back⁵¹ and run?

Sampson Fear me not.⁵²

Gregory No, marry.⁵³ I fear thee!⁵⁴

Sampson Let us take⁵⁵ the law of our sides.⁵⁶ Let them begin.

50 *Gregory* I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they
list.⁵⁷

43 in what sense = what (1) meaning, (2) physical feeling (of the five senses)

44 remain (1) on my feet, (2) with penis erect

45 pretty piece of flesh = (1) handsome, well-made man, (2) sexually well
endowed/of considerable genital size

46 were

47 poor John = dried salt cod, a poor man's food

48 (1) weapon of war, (2) penis

49 (singular and plural, in Elizabethan English, are often used differently from
modern usage)

50 (more sexual punning)

51 turn thy back: deliberately provoking misunderstanding of "back you"

52 fear me not = don't worry about me

53 exclamatory: oh yes!*

54 I fear thee = I'm afraid of you (being behind me? being disloyal?)

55 (1) follow, affirm, be careful to keep, make use of (2) act as if

56 of our sides = on our side

57 please (verb)

Sampson Nay, as they dare.⁵⁸ I will bite my thumb⁵⁹ at them,
which is disgrace to them, if they bear it.

Abram Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson I do bite my thumb, sir. 55

Abram Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson (*aside to Gregory*) Is the law of⁶⁰ our side if I say ay?

Gregory (*aside to Sampson*) No.

Sampson No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir. But I bite
my thumb, sir. 60

Gregory Do you quarrel, sir?

Abram Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

Sampson But if you do, sir, I am for you.⁶¹ I serve as good a man
as you.

Abram No better. 65

Sampson Well, sir.⁶²

ENTER BENVOLIO⁶³

Gregory (*aside to Sampson*) Say “better.” Here comes one of my
master’s kinsmen.

Sampson Yes, better, sir.

Abram You lie. 70

Sampson Draw, if you be⁶⁴ men. Gregory, remember thy

58 have the courage/boldness

59 bite my thumb = snap my thumb nail with my upper teeth (derisive,
condescending)

60 on

61 I am for you = I am ready/a match for you

62 (equivocal remark, indicating uncertainty, indecision)

63 (benVOLyo)

64 are (subjunctive)

swashing⁶⁵ blow.

THEY FIGHT

Benvolio (beating down their swords) Part fools!

Put up⁶⁶ your swords. You know not what you do.

ENTER TYBALT

75 *Tybalt* What, art thou drawn⁶⁷ among these heartless hinds?⁶⁸

Turn thee, Benvolio! Look upon thy death.

Benvolio I do but⁶⁹ keep the peace. Put up thy sword,

Or manage⁷⁰ it to part⁷¹ these men with⁷² me.

Tybalt What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word

80 As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

Have at thee,⁷³ coward!

THEY FIGHT

ENTER AN OFFICER, AND THREE OR FOUR CITIZENS
WITH CLUBS OR PARTISANS⁷⁴

Officer Clubs, bills,⁷⁵ and partisans! Strike! Beat them down!

Citizens Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

65 slashing

66 away

67 with your sword out

68 drawn among these heartless hinds = wielding your sword among such spiritless/foolish domestic servants

69 but = only*

70 wield, use

71 separate

72 along with

73 have at thee = (an imperative, announcing an attack)

74 long-handled spears with various lateral cutting projections

75 long-handled, sometimes concave axe-like weapons with spikes jutting in the other direction from their blades

ENTER CAPULET IN HIS GOWN,⁷⁶ AND LADY CAPULET

Capulet What noise is this? Give me my long sword,⁷⁷
ho!

Lady Capulet A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword? 85

Capulet My sword, I say! Old Montague is come.
And flourishes⁷⁸ his blade in spite of⁷⁹ me.

ENTER MONTAGUE AND LADY MONTAGUE

Montague Thou villain⁸⁰ Capulet! – (*to Lady Montague*)
Hold me not, let me go.

Lady Montague Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

ENTER PRINCE, WITH HIS ATTENDANTS

Prince Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace, 90

Profaners⁸¹ of this neighbor-stained steel:⁸²

Will they not hear? What, ho! You men, you beasts,⁸³

That quench the fire of your pernicious⁸⁴ rage

With purple fountains issuing from your veins:

On pain of torture, from those bloody hands 95

Throw your mistempered⁸⁵ weapons to the ground

76 nightgown, dressing gown, bathrobe

77 long sword = sword with long cutting blade

78 brandishes, waves about

79 in spite of = as an insult to/in hatred/contempt for

80 (1) lowborn peasant, (2) rascal, scoundrel*

81 defilers, violators

82 neighbor-stained steel = weapons stained with the blood of your neighbors

83 men of animal nature

84 destructive, ruinous, fatal

85 (1) tempered for evil purpose, (2) disorderly (steel is “tempered” in its manufacture)

And hear the sentence⁸⁶ of your movèd⁸⁷ prince.
 Three civil⁸⁸ brawls, bred of⁸⁹ an airy⁹⁰ word
 By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
 100 Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets
 And made Verona's ancient⁹¹ citizens
 Cast by⁹² their grave,⁹³ beseeming ornaments⁹⁴
 To wield old partisans, in hands as⁹⁵ old,
 Cankered⁹⁶ with peace, to part⁹⁷ your cankered⁹⁸ hate.
 105 If ever you disturb our streets again
 Your lives shall pay⁹⁹ the forfeit¹⁰⁰ of the peace.
 For this time¹⁰¹ all the rest depart away.
 You, Capulet, shall¹⁰² go along with me,
 And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
 110 To know our¹⁰³ farther pleasure¹⁰⁴ in this case,¹⁰⁵

86 authoritative decision/judgment

87 indignant, angered

88 civil = community wide/among citizens

89 bred of = generated by/born of

90 (1) lightly spoken, flippant (2) empty, imaginary

91 aged, old, venerable

92 cast by = throw away/aside, shed, drop

93 respected, revered

94 beseeming ornaments = appropriate/befitting* equipment/accessories

95 just as, equally

96 rusted, corroded

97 break up

98 infected, gangrened, depraved

99 pay for

100 breach, violation

101 this time = now

102 must

103 the royal "we," meaning "I"

104 farther pleasure = additional wishes

105 set of circumstances

To old Freetown, our common judgment place.¹⁰⁶
 Once more, on pain¹⁰⁷ of death, all men depart.¹⁰⁸

EXEUNT ALL BUT¹⁰⁹ MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE,
 AND BENVOLIO

Montague Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad¹¹⁰?

Speak, nephew. Were you by¹¹¹ when it began?

Benvolio Here were the servants of your adversary 115

And yours, close fighting¹¹² ere¹¹³ I did approach.

I drew to part them. In the instant¹¹⁴ came

The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared,¹¹⁵

Which as¹¹⁶ he breathed defiance¹¹⁷ to my ears,

He swung about¹¹⁸ his head and cut the winds, 120

Who, nothing hurt withal,¹¹⁹ hissed him in scorn.

While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,

Came more and more, and fought on part and part,¹²⁰

Till the Prince came, who parted either part.¹²¹

106 common judgment place = general/usual decision-making place

107 penalty, punishment

108 go away (a command)

109 except

110 set . . . abroad = set astir, afoot (set abroad a cask/barrel of liquor = to open)

111 in the vicinity, close by

112 close fighting = fighting hard/at close quarters

113 before*

114 in the instant = at that moment

115 at the ready, drawn from its sheath

116 even as

117 breathed defiance = exhaled/spoke hostility/challenge

118 around*

119 therewith

120 on part and part = some on one side and some on the other

121 parted either part = separated each side/both sides

- 125 *Lady Montague* O, where is Romeo? Saw you him to-day?
 Right glad I am he was not at this fray.
- Benvolio* Madam, an hour before the worshipped¹²² sun
 Peered forth¹²³ the golden window of the East,
 A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad,¹²⁴
 130 Where underneath the grove of sycamore
 That westward rooteth¹²⁵ from the city's side¹²⁶
 So early walking did I see your son.
 Towards him I made,¹²⁷ but he was ware¹²⁸ of me
 And stole¹²⁹ into the covert¹³⁰ of the wood.
- 135 I – measuring¹³¹ his affections¹³² by my own,
 Which then most sought where most¹³³ might not be found,
 Being one too many by¹³⁴ my weary¹³⁵ self –
 Pursued¹³⁶ my humor,¹³⁷ not pursuing his,
 And gladly shunned who¹³⁸ gladly fled from me.
- 140 *Montague* Many a morning hath he there been seen,
 With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,

122 adored, venerated

123 forth from

124 in the open air

125 grows

126 outskirts

127 went, headed

128 wary

129 quietly withdrew*

130 shelter, dense / thickly grown part

131 judging, evaluating

132 feelings, emotions, state of mind*

133 most sought where most = principally sought where most people

134 all by

135 (1) discontented, dispirited, depressed, (2) tiresome

136 followed

137 mood*

138 he who

Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs,
 But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
 Should in the farthest East begin to draw
 The shady curtains¹³⁹ from Aurora's¹⁴⁰ bed, 145
 Away from light steals home my heavy¹⁴¹ son
 And private in his chamber pens himself,
 Shuts up his windows, locks fair¹⁴² daylight out
 And makes himself an artificial night.
 Black¹⁴³ and portentous¹⁴⁴ must this humor prove,¹⁴⁵ 150
 Unless good counsel¹⁴⁶ may the cause remove.
Benvolio My noble uncle, do you know the cause?
Montague I neither know it nor can learn of¹⁴⁷ him.
Benvolio Have you importuned¹⁴⁸ him by any means?¹⁴⁹
Montague Both by myself and many other friends. 155
 But he, his own affections' counselor,
 Is to himself – I will not say how true –
 But to himself so secret and so close,¹⁵⁰
 So far from sounding and discovery,¹⁵¹

139 (bed curtains were in common use)

140 the dawn

141 (1) grave, severe, somber, (2) troubled, sad, despondent

142 fine

143 melancholy, dismal

144 ominous, threatening

145 demonstrate/turn out to be

146 advice, guidance, judgment*

147 from

148 urged, pressed

149 by any means = in any way*

150 uncommunicative

151 sounding and discovery = investigation/determination and explanation/
disclosure

160 As is the bud bit with¹⁵² an envious¹⁵³ worm
 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air
 Or dedicate¹⁵⁴ his beauty to the sun.
 Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow
 We would as willingly give cure as¹⁵⁵ know.

ENTER ROMEO

165 *Benvolio* See, where he comes. So please you step aside,
 I'll know his grievance,¹⁵⁶ or be much denied.¹⁵⁷
Montague I would thou wert¹⁵⁸ so happy by thy stay¹⁵⁹
 To hear¹⁶⁰ true shrift.¹⁶¹ Come, madam, let's away.

EXEUNT MONTAGUE AND LADY MONTAGUE

Benvolio Good morrow,¹⁶² cousin.¹⁶³

Romeo Is the day so young?

Benvolio But new¹⁶⁴ struck nine.

170 *Romeo* Ay me! sad hours seem long.

Was that my father that went hence so fast?

Benvolio It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

152 by

153 malicious, spiteful*

154 devote, open

155 as we would

156 the cause/nature of his grief

157 much denied = deeply/intensely refused/rejected

158 would thou wert = wish you might be

159 by thy stay = on account of your remaining here

160 to hear = that you will hear

161 true shrift = honest/sincere/reliable penance/repentance

162 morning, day*

163 relative, any member of the larger family (often shortened to "coz")*

164 newly, just

Romeo Not having that which having¹⁶⁵ makes them short.
 Benvolio In love?
 Romeo Out – 175
 Benvolio Of love?
 Romeo Out of her favor,¹⁶⁶ where I am in love.
 Benvolio Alas that love, so gentle¹⁶⁷ in his view,¹⁶⁸
 Should be so tyrannous and rough¹⁶⁹ in proof.¹⁷⁰
 Romeo Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,¹⁷¹ 180
 Should without eyes¹⁷² see pathways to his will.¹⁷³
 Where shall we dine? (*looks around*) O me! What fray was
 here?
 Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.
 Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.¹⁷⁴
 Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate, 185
 O anything of¹⁷⁵ nothing first create!¹⁷⁶
 O heavy lightness, serious vanity!¹⁷⁷
 Misshapen chaos of well-seeming¹⁷⁸ forms!

165 if one has it

166 good graces

167 courteous, noble*

168 in his view = in his ("its") appearance

169 disagreeable, harsh*

170 in proof = how it turns out/is experienced

171 view is muffled still = whose sight is forever/always blinded

172 without eyes: Cupid is blind

173 pleasure, desire

174 (if "here" = the setting/location, because Rosaline, his current love, is a Capulet [and thus with "hate"]; if "here" = inside Romeo, because his heart is all awirl)

175 from, out of

176 created

177 futility, foolishness, idleness

178 appearing* to be good

190 Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,
 Still¹⁷⁹ waking sleep, that is not what it is!
 This love feel I, that feel no love¹⁸⁰ in this.
 Dost thou not laugh?

Benvolio No, coz, I rather weep.

Romeo Good heart,¹⁸¹ at what?

Benvolio At thy good heart's
 oppression.¹⁸²

Romeo Why, such is love's transgression.¹⁸³

195 Grievs of mine own lie heavy in my breast,
 Which¹⁸⁴ thou wilt propagate,¹⁸⁵ to have it pressed¹⁸⁶
 With more of thine.¹⁸⁷ This love that thou hast shown
 Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.¹⁸⁸
 Love is a smoke raised¹⁸⁹ with the fume¹⁹⁰ of sighs;
 200 Being purged,¹⁹¹ a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
 Being vexed,¹⁹² a sea nourished with lovers' tears.
 What is it else?¹⁹³ A madness most discreet,¹⁹⁴

179 (adverb)

180 feel no love = take no pleasure

181 (used like *mon ami*, in French)

182 burden, grief, trouble

183 sin

184 which griefs

185 multiply

186 have it pressed = squeeze my heart

187 your love for me

188 too much of mine own = my own grief, already too much

189 caused, roused, provoked

190 with the fume = by the exhalation/vapors

191 washed away, purified

192 irritated, annoyed, grieved

193 besides, in addition*

194 (1) cautious, judicious, prudent, (2) courteous, polite

A choking gall,¹⁹⁵ and a preserving sweet.¹⁹⁶

Farewell, my coz.

Benvolio Soft!¹⁹⁷ I will go along.¹⁹⁸

An¹⁹⁹ if you leave me so, you do me wrong. 205

Romeo Tut! I have lost myself, I am not here.

This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

Benvolio Tell me in sadness,²⁰⁰ who is that you love?

Romeo What, shall I groan and tell thee?

Benvolio Groan? Why, no.

But sadly tell me who. 210

Romeo Bid²⁰¹ a sick man in sadness make his will.

Ah, word ill²⁰² urged to one that is so ill.

In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

Benvolio I aimed so near²⁰³ when I supposed you loved.

Romeo A right good markman,²⁰⁴ and she's fair²⁰⁵ I love. 215

Benvolio A right fair²⁰⁶ mark,²⁰⁷ fair²⁰⁸ coz, is soonest hit.

Romeo Well, in that hit²⁰⁹ you miss. She'll not be hit

195 choking gall = smothering bitterness

196 preserving sweet = preservative sweetness

197 wait a minute!

198 along with you

199 and

200 in sadness = in earnest

201 ask, entreat, beg

202 harshly, hurtfully, wrongfully, blamefully

203 closely

204 marksman

205 beautiful

206 right fair = proper/upright fine/pleasing

207 target

208 (term of respect/courtesy: Shakespeare uses "fair" three ways in the space of eight words)

209 stroke, guess

- With Cupid's arrow. She hath Dian's²¹⁰ wit,²¹¹
 And, in strong proof of chastity well armed,²¹²
 220 From Love's²¹³ weak childish bow she lives unharmed.
 She will not stay²¹⁴ the siege of loving terms,²¹⁵
 Nor bide²¹⁶ th' encounter²¹⁷ of assailing²¹⁸ eyes,
 Nor ope²¹⁹ her lap²²⁰ to saint-seducing gold.
 O she's rich in beauty, only poor
 225 That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.²²¹
Benvolio Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?
Romeo She hath, and in that sparing²²² makes huge waste,
 For beauty, starved with her²²³ severity,²²⁴
 Cuts beauty off from all posterity.
 230 She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,
 To merit bliss²²⁵ by making me despair.
 She hath forsworn²²⁶ to Love, and in that vow
 Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

210 Diana = goddess of hunting and of chastity

211 mental capacity, intellectual power (also "wits")*

212 equipped for battle

213 Cupid's

214 quietly endure ("sustain, abide by, depend on, support")

215 (1) conditions, (2) words

216 submit to, tolerate

217 face-to-face meeting, skirmish, duel

218 attacking, assaulting

219 open

220 (1) front of a skirt, (2) female genitalia

221 with beauty dies her store = what dies, along with her beauty, is her capacity for reproduction

222 saving, frugality, economy

223 Rosaline's

224 strictness, sternness, moral austerity

225 merit bliss = deserve / obtain her (Rosaline's) (1) happiness, (2) salvation

226 falsely sworn, perjured herself

- Benvolio* Be ruled²²⁷ by me: forget to think of her.
- Romeo* O teach me how I should forget to think. 235
- Benvolio* By giving liberty unto thine eyes.
Examine other beauties.
- Romeo* 'Tis the way
To call hers – exquisite – in question²²⁸ more.
These happy²²⁹ masks that kiss fair ladies' brows,
Being black²³⁰ puts us in mind they hide the fair. 240
He that is stricken blind cannot forget
The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.
Show me a mistress²³¹ that is passing²³² fair,
What doth her beauty serve but as a note²³³
Where I may read²³⁴ who passed²³⁵ that passing fair? 245
Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.
- Benvolio* I'll pay²³⁶ that doctrine,²³⁷ or else die in debt.²³⁸

EXEUNT

227 guided*

228 call hers – exquisite – in question more = call/summon even more to
mind her beauty, which is exquisite

229 lucky, fortunate

230 (1) black (color), (2) unattractive

231 woman commanding a man's heart, lady love

232 surpassing, transcendently*

233 sign, token

234 see, find

235 surpassed

236 discharge the obligation of

237 lesson, knowledge

238 die in debt = die trying

SCENE 2

A street

ENTER CAPULET, COUNT PARIS, AND HIS SERVANT

Capulet But Montague is bound¹ 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 reckoning² are you both,
 5 And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.
 But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?³

Capulet But saying o'er what I have said before.
 My child is yet a stranger⁴ in the world:
 She hath not seen the change⁵ of fourteen years.
 10 Let two more summers wither⁶ 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 marred⁷ are those so early made.
 The earth hath swallowed all my hopes⁸ but she:
 15 She is the hopeful⁹ lady of my earth.¹⁰
 But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart.
 My will to her consent is but a part.

1 (1) constrained, compelled, (2) under bond?

2 account, distinction

3 (1) supplication, request, (2) wooing, courting (paternal approval being primary)

4 newcomer

5 changing, succession, passing

6 shrivel, fade away

7 spoiled, injured, disfigured

8 expectations: children

9 full of/laden with hope

10 my earth = my life (and hopes)

An she agree, within¹¹ her scope¹² of choice
 Lies my consent and fair according¹³ voice.
 This night I hold an old accustomed feast¹⁴ 20
 Whereto¹⁵ I have invited many a guest,
 Such as I love – and you among¹⁶ the store,¹⁷
 One more, most welcome, makes my number¹⁸ more.
 At my poor house look¹⁹ to behold this night
 Earth-treading²⁰ stars that make dark heaven light.²¹ 25
 Such comfort²² as do lusty²³ young men feel
 When well appareled²⁴ April on the heel
 Of limping²⁵ Winter treads, even such delight
 Among fresh fennel²⁶ buds shall you this night
 Inherit²⁷ at my house. Hear all, all see, 30
 And like her most whose merit most shall be,
 Which, on more view of many, mine,²⁸ being one,
 May stand in number,²⁹ though in reck'ning none.³⁰

11 inside, in the limits of, contained within

12 sphere, range, freedom

13 agreeing, matching, harmonious

14 accustomed feast = customary/habitual gathering/entertainment/banquet*

15 to which

16 you among = to add you to

17 company, abundance of persons

18 my number = the count of my guests

19 expect

20 walking, stepping, dancing

21 make dark heaven light = light up the dark sky

22 refreshment, invigoration, pleasure, delight

23 lively, merry, joyful

24 clothed, adorned (winter being bare, and April marking the coming of spring)

25 lame (by April, winter is old and enfeebled, ready to die)

26 savory herb with yellow flowers (some texts have “female”)

27 receive, take possession of

28 my daughter (Juliet)

29 stand in number = stand out/be first/number one among them?

30 though in reck'ning none = though in the mathematics of probability one is not strictly speaking a number

Come, go with me.³¹

(to *Servant*, giving him a paper)

Go, sirrah,³² trudge³³ about³⁴

35 Through fair Verona. Find those persons out
Whose names are written there, and to them say
My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.³⁵

EXEUNT CAPULET AND PARIS

Servant Find them out whose names are written here? It is
written that the shoemaker should meddle³⁶ with his yard³⁷
40 and the tailor with his last,³⁸ the fisher with his pencil and the
painter with his nets. But I am sent to find those persons
whose names are here writ, and can never find³⁹ what names
the writing person hath here writ. I must to⁴⁰ the learnèd. In
good time!

ENTER BENVOLIO AND ROMEO

45 *Benvolio* Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning,
One pain is lessened by another's⁴¹ anguish.

31 come GO with ME (the first two feet of an iambic pentameter line)

32 (used for low-ranking men and boys instead of "sir," indicating authority or rebuke)*

33 (undignified word for "walking")

34 go SIRrah TRUDGE aABOUT (the last three feet of the same iambic pentameter line: a spatial break is not necessarily a metrical break)

35 tarry, await*

36 be concerned, busy himself with

37 yardstick (measuring rod – which a shoemaker of course does not use: the servant's "confusion" seems deliberate, intended by him to emphasize the foolishness of sending an illiterate on such an errand)

38 wooden model of the foot

39 discover, learn

40 must to = must go to

41 another pain's

Turn giddy,⁴² and be holp⁴³ by backward turning.⁴⁴

One desperate⁴⁵ grief cures with another's languish.⁴⁶

Take thou some new infection to thy eye,⁴⁷

And the rank⁴⁸ poison of the old will die.

50

Romeo Your⁴⁹ plantain⁵⁰ leaf is excellent for that.

Benvolio For what, I pray thee?

Romeo For your broken⁵¹ shin.

Benvolio Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

Romeo Not mad, but bound⁵² more than a madman is,

Shut up in prison, kept without my food,

55

Whipped and tormented and – (*seeing Servant*) God den,⁵³
good fellow.⁵⁴

Servant God gi' go den. I pray,⁵⁵ sir, can you read?

Romeo Ay, mine own fortune⁵⁶ in my misery.

42 (1) light-headed, frivolous, (2) whirling in circles

43 helped

44 backward turning = facing the opposite way

45 dangerous, reckless, virtually hopeless*

46 sickness, decline, wasting away, suffering

47 (In *Rime Sparse*, 3.1304–74, foundation and source of Renaissance European love theory, Petrarch wrote of “the pathway from eyes to heart,” along which the instantly irresistible force of love travels. One look and the lover has fallen; one mutual look, and love sweeps both lovers away.)

48 strong, violent, excessive

49 “the” rather than modern “your” (see Romeo’s next speech for yet another such usage)

50 a low-growing herbal plant with broad, flat leaves, rather than the tropical tree with banana-like fruit

51 torn, bruised, wounded

52 fastened down, tied up

53 God den = good evening (“God give you good even”)*

54 (customary form of address, in speaking to someone of humble station, a “common” person)

55 ask earnestly and politely

56 future

Servant Perhaps you have learned it without book.⁵⁷ But I pray,
60 can you read anything you see?

Romeo Ay, if I know the letters and the language.

Servant Ye say honestly.⁵⁸ Rest you merry!⁵⁹

Romeo Stay, fellow; I can read.

HE READS THE LETTER

“Signior Martino and his wife and daughters;
65 County Anselmo and his beauteous sisters;
The lady widow of Vitruvio;
Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces;
Mercutio and his brother Valentine;
Mine uncle Capulet, his wife and daughters;
70 My fair niece Rosaline, and Livia;
Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt;
Lucio and the lively Helena.”

GIVES BACK THE PAPER

A fair⁶⁰ assembly. Whither should they come?

Servant Up.

75 *Romeo* Whither?

Servant To supper, to our house.

Romeo Whose house?

Servant My master's.

Romeo Indeed I should have asked you that before.

80 *Servant* Now I'll tell you without asking. My master is the great

57 without book = by heart

58 decently, worthily, without falseness

59 rest you merry = may you be merry/happy

60 fine, elegant

rich Capulet and if you be not of the house of Montagues,
I pray come and crush⁶¹ a cup of wine. Rest you merry.

EXIT

- Benvolio* At this same ancient⁶² feast of Capulet's
Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou so lov'st,
With all the admired beauties of Verona. 85
Go thither, and with unattainted⁶³ eye
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.
- Romeo* When the devout religion of mine eye⁶⁴
Maintains such falsehood, then⁶⁵ turn tears to fires, 90
And these⁶⁶ who, often drowned,⁶⁷ could never die,⁶⁸
Transparent⁶⁹ heretics, be⁷⁰ burnt for liars.
One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sun
Ne'er⁷¹ saw her match since first the world begun.
- Benvolio* Tut! You saw her fair, none else being by, 95
Herself poised with herself in either eye.⁷²
But in that⁷³ crystal scales⁷⁴ let there be weighed

61 drink

62 ("old" in the sense of "traditional")

63 unspotted, free from blemish, clear

64 (see act 1, scene 2, note 47)

65 then let

66 those

67 in tears

68 (1) die (literally), (2) experience sexual orgasm

69 obvious

70 let them be

71 never*

72 herself poised with herself in either eye = Rosaline measured/balanced
against herself in each of your two eyes

73 those

74 crystal scales = Romeo's eyes

Your lady's love⁷⁵ against some other maid

That I will show you shining at this feast,

100 And she⁷⁶ shall scant show⁷⁷ well that now seems best.

Romeo I'll go along,⁷⁸ no such sight to be shown,

But to rejoice in splendor of my own.⁷⁹

EXEUNT

75 your lady's love = your love of this lady

76 the one (literally, the one "she")

77 scant show = hardly/barely seem/appear

78 go along = accompany you

79 splendor of my own = my own lady love's splendor

SCENE 3
Capulet's house

ENTER LADY CAPULET AND NURSE

Lady Capulet Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth¹ to me.

Nurse Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,²
I bade³ her come. What, lamb! what, ladybird!⁴
God forbid. Where's this girl? What,⁵ Juliet!

ENTER JULIET

Juliet How now?⁶ Who calls?

Nurse Your mother.

Juliet Madam,

I'm here.

5

What is your will?

Lady Capulet This is the matter⁷ – Nurse, give leave⁸ awhile,
We must talk in secret. (*Nurse starts to leave*) Nurse, come back
again.

I have remembered me, thou's⁹ hear our counsel.¹⁰

Thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty¹¹ age.

10

1 (1) out, (2) at once

2 (she can swear by it at twelve – but not thereafter)

3 urged, begged

4 sweetheart

5 well!/now!/hey!

6 how now = why

7 subject, theme, substance*

8 give leave = please leave

9 thou's = you are supposed to/must (“thou shalt”)

10 consultation, exchange of opinions, conversation

11 fine, proper, pleasing

Nurse Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

Lady Capulet She's not fourteen.

Nurse I'll lay¹² fourteen of my teeth –

And yet, to my teen¹³ be it spoken, I have but four –

She is not fourteen. How long is it now

To Lammas-tide?¹⁴

15 *Lady Capulet* A fortnight¹⁵ and odd¹⁶ days.

Nurse Even or odd,¹⁷ of all days in the year,

Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.

Susan¹⁸ and she (God rest all Christian souls)

Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God,

20 She was too good for me. But as I said,

On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.¹⁹

That shall she. Marry, I remember it well.

'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,

And she was weaned (I never shall forget it),

25 Of all the days of the year, upon that day,

For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,²⁰

Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse²¹ wall.

My lord and you were then at Mantua.

12 bet

13 sorrow, affliction

14 August 1 (harvest festival for early wheat crop: "Lammas wheat" = winter wheat)

15 two weeks ("fourteen" nights)

16 and odd = plus a few days over fourteen

17 (a pun on "odd" as just defined and "odd" as opposed to "even"?)

18 (the Nurse's dead daughter)

19 on LAMmas EVE at NIGHT shall SHE be fourTEEN (iambic pentameter is neither mechanical nor rigid)

20 laid wormwood to my dug = placed bitter herb on my nipple

21 pigeon house

Nay, I do bear²² a brain. But as I said,
 When it²³ did taste the wormwood on the nipple 30
 Of my dug and felt it bitter,²⁴ pretty fool,²⁵
 To see it tetchy²⁶ and fall out²⁷ with the dug!
 Shake,²⁸ quoth²⁹ the dovehouse!³⁰ 'Twas no need, I trow,³¹
 To bid me trudge.³²
 And since that time it is eleven years, 35
 For then she could stand high lone.³³ Nay, by th' rood,³⁴
 She could have run and waddled³⁵ all about,
 For even the day before she broke³⁶ her brow,³⁷
 And then my husband – God be with his soul,
 'A³⁸ was a merry man – took up³⁹ the child. 40
 “Yea,” quoth he, “dost thou fall upon thy face?
 Thou wilt fall backward⁴⁰ when thou hast more wit,
 Wilt thou not, Jule?” and, by my holiday, ⁴¹

22 (1) have, (2) still have (though old)

23 the baby

24 of my DUG and FELT it BITter

25 (term of endearment/pity, especially in speaking to/of children)

26 quickly irritable/annoyed

27 fall out = quarrel, disagree (verb)

28 get moving!

29 said

30 (the wall thereof shook, when the child started)

31 believe, expect, hope (“I can tell you”)

32 go away, be off

33 high lone = alone, by herself

34 the cross on which Christ was crucified

35 swaying from one leg to the other, like a duck

36 cut

37 forehead

38 he*

39 took up = caught/lifted up

40 fall backward = have sexual intercourse

41 holy relic/place (variant spelling of “halidom,” from Old English)

- The pretty wretch⁴² left⁴³ crying, and said “Ay.”
 45 To see now how a jest shall come about.⁴⁴
 I warrant,⁴⁵ an I should live a thousand years,
 I never should forget it. “Wilt thou not, Jule?” quoth he,
 And, pretty fool,⁴⁶ it stinted⁴⁷ and said “Ay.”
Lady Capulet Enough of this. I pray thee hold thy peace.
 50 *Nurse* Yes, madam. Yet I cannot choose but laugh
 To think it should leave crying and say “Ay.”
 And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow
 A bump as big as a young cock’rel’s stone,⁴⁸
 A perilous knock,⁴⁹ and it cried bitterly.
 55 “Yea,” quoth my husband, “fall’st upon thy face?
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age.⁵⁰
 Wilt thou not, Jule?” It stinted, and said “Ay.”
Juliet And stint thou too, I pray thee, Nurse, say I.
Nurse Peace, I have done. God mark⁵¹ thee to his grace,
 60 Thou wast the prettiest babe that e’er I nursed.
 An I might live to see thee married once,⁵²
 I have my wish.

“haligdom,” meaning “sanctity/sanctuary”: halig = holy, dom = custom, power, glory)

42 pretty wretch = fine little person/creature

43 stopped

44 come about = come true

45 promise, pledge*

46 pretty fool = nice little innocent

47 stopped

48 young cock’rel’s stone = (1) young cock’s testicle, (2) young man’s testicle

49 perilous knock = serious blow/thump

50 to age = old enough

51 God mark = may God set/make/identify

52 at some/any time

- Lady Capulet* Marry, that “marry” is the very⁵³ theme
I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition⁵⁴ to be married? 65
- Juliet* It is an honor that I dream not of.
- Nurse* An honor? Were not I thine only nurse,
I would say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.
- Lady Capulet* Well, think of marriage now.⁵⁵ Younger than you,
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,⁵⁶ 70
Are made already mothers. By my count,
I was your mother much upon⁵⁷ these years
That you are now a maid.⁵⁸ Thus then in brief:⁵⁹
The valiant⁶⁰ Paris seeks you for his love.
- Nurse* A man, young lady! Lady, such a man 75
As all the world – why he’s a man of wax.⁶¹
- Lady Capulet* Verona’s summer hath not such a flower.
- Nurse* Nay, he’s a flower, in faith – a very⁶² flower.
- Lady Capulet* What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast. 80
Read o’er the volume⁶³ of young Paris’ face
And find delight writ there with beauty’s pen.

53 same, exact

54 bent of mind

55 think of marriage now = *now* think about marriage

56 ladies of esteem = reputable/well-respected ladies

57 much upon = approximately at

58 unmarried woman, virgin*

59 in brief = briefly, shortly, in a few words

60 (1) brave, courageous, (2) rich

61 man of wax = man of perfect figure/stature (a “model”)

62 true, real*

63 book

- Examine every married lineament⁶⁴
 And see how one another lends content⁶⁵ –
 85 And what obscured⁶⁶ in this fair volume lies
 Find written in the margent⁶⁷ of his eyes.
 This precious book of love, this unbound⁶⁸ lover,
 To beautify him only lacks a cover.⁶⁹
 The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
 90 For fair without⁷⁰ the fair within to hide.⁷¹
 That book⁷² in many's eyes doth share the glory⁷³
 That in gold clasps⁷⁴ locks in the golden story.⁷⁵
 So shall you share all that he doth possess
 By having him,⁷⁶ making yourself no less.⁷⁷
 95 *Nurse* No less? Nay, bigger. Women grow by men.⁷⁸

64 married lineament = joined/harmonious feature

65 one another lends content = one lends substance to another

66 hidden

67 comment written/printed in the margins

68 not tied up, (the pages) unrestrained/not secured

69 that which encloses (a book's cover), which shelters (body cover – armor, clothing), which supports (a wife!)

70 outside

71 the fish lives . . . to hide = just as the fish by its very nature lives in the sea, and shields/protects the fish that swim in it, so too it is a source of honest pride for one who is fair on the outside (a woman) to shield/protect one who is fair inside (a man)

72 the man

73 admiration, praise

74 gold clasps (noun) = gold fastenings (as costly books were then often so bound)

75 locks in the golden story = encloses/secures/confines the golden life (“story/history”)

76 having him = (1) possessing him, (2) accepting him/his proposal of marriage (“will you have me?” spoken by a man to a woman, meant “will you marry me?”)

77 no less = no less esteemed/worthy

78 (by being made pregnant)

Lady Capulet Speak briefly, can you like of⁷⁹ Paris' love?

Juliet I'll look to like,⁸⁰ if looking liking move,⁸¹

But no more deep will I endart⁸² mine eye

Than your consent gives strength⁸³ to make it⁸⁴ fly.

ENTER SERVINGMAN

Servingman Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, 100

you called, my young lady asked for, the Nurse cursed in the
pantry,⁸⁵ and everything in extremity. I must hence to wait.

I beseech you follow straight.⁸⁶

Lady Capulet We follow thee.

EXIT SERVINGMAN

Juliet, the County⁸⁷ stays.⁸⁸

Nurse Go, girl, seek happy nights to⁸⁹ happy days. 105

EXEUNT

79 like of = approve, be pleased by

80 look to like = take care/be sure to consider/find out if I like (him/his proposal)

81 if looking liking move = if looking makes me want to like

82 pierce with my eye (the effect of which is discussed in act 1, scene 2, note 47: the usual meaning of "dart" is "arrow," which is Cupid's weapon)

83 power, force

84 (the antecedent of "it" is "mine eye," though the modern sense of "mine eye" is "my eyes")

85 storeroom for food and often for table linen and dishes (in the first line of act 4, scene 4, the Nurse is given keys to the pantry; her absence therefrom is probably why she is being cursed)

86 directly, at once* (though always printed as prose, this speech constitutes four iambic pentameter lines and contains two vivid internal rhymes, "nurse cursed" and "wait . . . straight.")

87 Count (equivalent of Earl)

88 waits

89 leading to? in addition to? accompanying, in accord with? connected to?

SCENE 4

A street

ENTER ROMEO, MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, WITH FIVE OR SIX
OTHER MASKERS, AND TORCHBEARERS

Romeo What, shall this speech be spoke¹ for our excuse?

Or shall we on² without apology?

Benvolio The date is out of such prolixity.³

We'll have no Cupid hoodwinked⁴ with a scarf,⁵

5 Bearing a Tartar's⁶ painted bow⁷ of lath,⁸

Scaring the ladies like a crowkeeper,⁹

Nor no without book¹⁰ prologue, faintly¹¹ spoke

After the prompter,¹² for our entrance.¹³

But let them measure¹⁴ us by what they will,

10 We'll measure¹⁵ them a measure,¹⁶ and be gone.

1 speech . . . spoke (convention called for maskers, who were usually intruders, not invited/expected, to deliver a speech, flattering/propitiating the host and the invited guests)

2 proceed

3 the date is out of such prolixity = the custom of delivering a prolix speech is now out of date

4 blindfolded, and thus in effect blinded (as Cupid was often thought to be)

5 band, usually of silk

6 Central Asian

7 painted bow = something not a bow but painted to look like one

8 of lath = made of thin, narrow strips of wood

9 (1) scarecrow carrying a bow, (2) a field hand/boy hired to frighten crows

10 without book (adjectival) = memorized (as opposed to extemporaneous)

11 softly, hesitantly, uncertainly

12 after the prompter = following a prompter's reminders

13 for our entrance = as/in place of our invitations/right to enter
(ENterANCE)

14 (1) look us up and down, (2) evaluate, appraise

15 give

16 dance*

- Romeo* Give me a torch. I am not for this ambling.¹⁷
 Being but heavy,¹⁸ I will bear¹⁹ the light.
- Mercutio* Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.
- Romeo* Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes
 With nimble²⁰ soles, I have a soul of lead
 So stakes²¹ me to the ground I cannot move. 15
- Mercutio* You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings
 And soar with them above a common bound.²²
- Romeo* I am too sore enpiercèd²³ with his shaft²⁴
 To soar with his light feathers,²⁵ and so bound²⁶
 I cannot bound a pitch above²⁷ dull²⁸ woe. 20
 Under love's heavy burden do I sink.
- Mercutio* And, to sink in it, should you burden²⁹ love?
 Too great oppression for a tender thing.³⁰
- Romeo* Is love a tender thing? It is too rough, 25
 Too rude,³¹ too boist'rous,³² and it pricks like thorn.
- Mercutio* If love be rough with you, be rough with love.

17 easy-paced, sometimes artificial walking/dancing

18 oppressed, sorrowful

19 carry

20 quick, swift, agile, light

21 so stakes = which so fastens

22 (1) limit, (2) leap

23 sore enpiercèd = painfully/severely penetrated/run through

24 rod forming the body of an arrow

25 with his light feathers = as he does with the light feathers of his wings

26 fastened, tied down (adjective)

27 bound (verb) a pitch above = leap higher than

28 slow, stupid, sluggish, drowsy

29 (1) load, oppress, (2) criticize

30 a tender thing = (1) love, (2) a woman, bearing his weight in sexual intercourse (as he "sinks in" to her), (3) a woman's genitals

31 uncultivated, barbarous, harsh, violent*

32 (1) stiff, coarse, unyielding, (2) truculent, fierce, violent

- Prick love for pricking,³³ and you beat love down.³⁴
 Give me a case³⁵ to put my visage³⁶ in.
 30 A visor for a visor!³⁷ What care I
 What curious³⁸ eye doth quote³⁹ deformities?
 Here⁴⁰ are the beetle brows⁴¹ shall blush for me.
Benvolio Come, knock and enter, and no sooner in
 But every man betake him⁴² to his legs.⁴³
 35 *Romeo* A torch for me. Let wantons⁴⁴ light of heart
 Tickle⁴⁵ the senseless⁴⁶ rushes⁴⁷ with their heels,
 For I am proverbed⁴⁸ with a grandsire phrase:⁴⁹
 I'll be a candle holder⁵⁰ and look on.
 The game⁵¹ was ne'er so fair,⁵² and I am done.⁵³

33 (1) painfully sticking, (2) sexual intercourse (then as now the noun “prick” = vulgar term for penis)

34 beat love down = overthrow/force down love

35 holder, sheath

36 my visage = my assumed/pretend face/appearance (his mask)

37 a visor for a visor = a mask (disguise) for a mask (his face)

38 careful, attentive, fussy

39 mark, observe, scrutinize

40 in this mask

41 beetle brows = black, jutting eyebrows

42 commit himself, resort

43 to his legs = dance

44 those free of care/given to unrestrained merriment, frisky

45 poke, touch, stir up

46 incapable of feeling

47 dry reeds spread on floors

48 furnished with a proverb

49 grandsire phrase = proverb as old as a grandfather

50 “If a man does not know how to play at cards, it is kind of him to hold the candle”

51 (1) amusement, fun, (2) amorous play/sport

52 ne'er so fair = never so fair as it is now (and that being so, it is time to give it up)

53 finished, used up

- Mercutio* Tut! Dun's the mouse, the constable's own word.⁵⁴ 40
 If thou art Dun,⁵⁵ we'll draw thee from the mire⁵⁶
 Of – save your reverence⁵⁷ – love, wherein thou stick'st⁵⁸
 Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight,⁵⁹ ho!
- Romeo* Nay, that's not so.
- Mercutio* I mean, sir, in delay
 We waste our lights⁶⁰ in vain, like lamps by⁶¹ day. 45
 Take our good meaning,⁶² for our judgment sits⁶³
 Five times in that⁶⁴ ere⁶⁵ once in our five wits.⁶⁶
- Romeo* And we mean⁶⁷ well, in going to this masque.
 But 'tis no wit⁶⁸ to go.

54 Dun's the mouse, the constable's own word = a mouse is brown, and proverbially quiet, like an officer of the peace (Romeo has just said he is "done")

55 (Mercutio swiftly changes directions, referring now to Dun the horse in an old Christmas game: those playing the game try to pull a large, heavy log, supposed to be Dun the horse, out of an imaginary mire)

56 (1) boggy/swampy ground, (2) dirt, filth, dung

57 save your reverence = excuse me (Mercutio apologizes – or pretends to – for using so obscene and dirty a word as "mire" to describe love: some texts have "sirreverence," with the same meaning, but "sirreverence" can also mean human excrement/dung)

58 are stuck

59 burn daylight = delay, waste time

60 (1) torches, (2) feelings, (3) capacities ("lights" also = the lungs: waste our lights = waste our breath, jabbering like this)

61 lit/burning in daylight

62 take our good meaning = choose/understand our/my correct meaning (instead of pretending, as Romeo clearly does, that he does not understand)

63 judgment sits = deliberate opinion/good sense is located/can be found

64 five times in that = five times as much in that good meaning

65 in preference to, rather than in

66 once in our five wits = one time in what we learn via our five senses ("wits")

67 intend (Romeo changes verbal direction every bit as swiftly, and lightly, as does Mercutio)

68 not sensible/wise/clever

Mercutio Why, may one ask?

Romeo I dreamt a dream tonight.⁶⁹

50 *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 Mab⁷⁰ hath been with you.

She is the fairies' midwife,⁷¹ and she comes

55 In shape no bigger than an agate stone

On the forefinger of an alderman,⁷²

Drawn⁷³ with a team of little atomies

Athwart⁷⁴ men's noses as they lie asleep —⁷⁵

Her wagon spokes made of long spinners'⁷⁶ legs,

60 The cover,⁷⁷ of the wings of grasshoppers;

Her traces,⁷⁸ of the smallest spider's web;

Her collars,⁷⁹ of the moonshine's wat'ry⁸⁰ beams;

Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash,⁸¹ of film;⁸²

69 last night

70 (an invented personage, probably meant to be “mythological/fairy”; but mab = slut, whore)

71 (it is she, among the fairies, who “delivers” their dreams to humans)

72 (the figures of diminutive persons were cut into agate stones, mounted on rings used for affixing seals on letters and other documents; aldermen were headmen/governors of trade organizations and municipal districts)

73 (Mab is drawn by a team of tiny creatures the size of atoms)

74 across

75 (the next eleven lines are differently ordered in some texts)

76 spiders'

77 outer covering of the wheels

78 straps/ropes connecting the collar of the drawing/pulling animal to the whiffletree/crossbar of the vehicle

79 her “horses”/draft animals' collars

80 (1) moist, (2) thin, (3) pale

81 flexible tip of a whip

82 membrane, filament, gossamer (spider webs?)

Her wagoner, a small gray-coated⁸³ gnat,
 Not half so big as a round little worm 65
 Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid;⁸⁴
 Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,
 Made by the joiner⁸⁵ squirrel or old grub,⁸⁶
 Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
 And in this state⁸⁷ she gallops night by night 70
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
 O'er courtiers'⁸⁸ knees, that dream on curtsies⁸⁹ straight;⁹⁰
 O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
 Which⁹¹ oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,⁹² 75
 Because their breaths with sweetmeats⁹³ tainted⁹⁴ are.
 Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;⁹⁵
 And sometime comes she with a tithe pig's⁹⁶ tail
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep, 80
 Then dreams he of another benefice.⁹⁷

83 gray-coated = a uniform? a reference to traditional homespun cloth?

84 serving maid (lazy serving maids were said to breed tiny worms in their fingers)

85 cabinetmaker

86 (squirrels *gnaw*; worm grubs *bore*)

87 pomp, splendor, exalted position/rank, greatness

88 those who congregate at a sovereign's court

89 gestures of respect, made by bending one's knees

90 without delay, immediately

91 who

92 (verb)

93 candies, cakes, etc.

94 contaminated, corrupted, stained

95 smelling out a suit = discovering some cause for a lawsuit? or a patron who will pay for his influence at court?

96 tithe pig = animal given as/in lieu of tithe money

97 salaried church post

Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
 Of breaches,⁹⁸ ambuscadoes,⁹⁹ Spanish blades,¹⁰⁰
 85 Of healths¹⁰¹ five fathom deep; and then anon¹⁰²
 Drums¹⁰³ in his ear, at which he starts¹⁰⁴ and wakes,
 And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
 That plats¹⁰⁵ the manes of horses in the night
 90 And bakes¹⁰⁶ the elflocks¹⁰⁷ in foul sluttish¹⁰⁸ hair,
 Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.¹⁰⁹
 This is the hag,¹¹⁰ when maids lie on their backs,
 That presses them and learns¹¹¹ them first to bear,¹¹²
 Making them women of good carriage.¹¹³
 This is she –
 95 *Romeo* Peace,¹¹⁴ peace, Mercutio, peace!
 Thou talk'st of nothing.
Mercutio True, I talk of dreams,

98 breaks in fortified walls

99 ambushes

100 swords (made of superior steel)

101 alcoholic toasts/pledges

102 at once*

103 she drums (verb)

104 is startled

105 plaits, intertwines

106 hardens, cakes

107 mass of tangled hair, caused in one's sleep by malicious elves

108 dirty, untidy

109 forebodes, promises (because it will anger the elves?)

110 female evil spirit/demon

111 instructs, teaches

112 (1) bear a lover's weight, (2) behave, walk, (3) bear children

113 of good carriage = of good bearing/capacity to carry

114 enough! quiet!

Which are the children of an idle¹¹⁵ brain,
 Begot¹¹⁶ of nothing but vain¹¹⁷ fantasy,¹¹⁸
 Which is as thin of substance¹¹⁹ as the air,
 And more inconstant than the wind, who woos 100
 Even now the frozen bosom¹²⁰ of the North
 And, being angered,¹²¹ puffs¹²² away from thence,
 Turning his face¹²³ to the dew-dropping South.

Benvolio This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves.¹²⁴

Supper is done, and we shall come too late. 105

Romeo I fear too early; for my mind misgives¹²⁵

Some consequence,¹²⁶ yet hanging¹²⁷ in the stars,¹²⁸

Shall bitterly begin his¹²⁹ fearful¹³⁰ date

With this night's revels and expire¹³¹ the term

Of a despised life, closed¹³² in my breast, 110

By some vile forfeit¹³³ of untimely¹³⁴ death.

115 empty, vacant*

116 generated, created

117 empty, vacant, worthless

118 illusory/imaginary appearance

119 solid/real matter*

120 seat of emotions/desires, heart

121 (because it is frozen/cold)

122 blows abruptly/quickly/hard

123 (some texts have "side")

124 from ourselves = away from our purpose/direction

125 suggests, fears

126 future result/event

127 yet hanging = even now pending

128 astrologically/fatefully determined

129 its

130 dreadful, terrible, awful

131 finish, end, conclude

132 shut, contained

133 vile forfeit = (1)base/low/horrid/despicable penalty, (2)contractually
 agreed-upon large additional penalty (for nonpayment)

134 premature*

But he that hath the steerage¹³⁵ of my course¹³⁶

Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen!

Benvolio Strike, drum.¹³⁷

THEY MARCH TO ONE SIDE OF THE STAGE, AND STAND THERE

135 steering, guidance

136 path, direction of onward movement*

137 drummer (a man leading the celebrants)

SCENE 5

*Capulet's house*SERVINGMEN COME FORTH WITH NAPKINS¹

First Servingman Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift² a trencher!³ He scrape⁴ a trencher!

Second Servingman When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

First Servingman Away with the joint stools,⁵ remove the court cupboard,⁶ look to⁷ the plate.⁸ Good⁹ thou, save me a piece of marchpane¹⁰ and, as thou loves me, let¹¹ the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell. – (*calling*) Anthony and Potpan!

¹²*Second Servingman* Ay, boy, ready.

First Servingman You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought for, in the great chamber.¹³

Third Servingman We cannot be here and there too.

1 “‘It is equally impolite to lick greasy fingers or to wipe them on one’s tunic,’ wrote Erasmus in 1530. ‘You should wipe them with the napkin or on the tablecloth.’” Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner*, 163

2 arrange, distribute

3 flat wooden platters, in the next century replaced by plates

4 scrape off, clean

5 joint stools = stools professionally made by a joiner/cabinetmaker

6 court cupboard = sideboard

7 look to = (1) attend to, take care of, (2) be careful of*

8 silver or gold utensils

9 (friendly/familiar)

10 marzipan

11 cause

12 (this and the next two speeches are attributed differently in some texts)

13 great chamber = main hall?

15 Cheerly,¹⁴ boys! Be brisk¹⁵ awhile,¹⁶ and the longer liver take
all.¹⁷

ENTER CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, JULIET, TYBALT,
NURSE, GUESTS, AND GENTLEWOMEN

Capulet (to Maskers) Welcome, gentlemen. Ladies that have
their toes

Unplagued¹⁸ with corns will walk a bout¹⁹ with you.

Ah, my mistresses,²⁰ which of you all

Will now deny to²¹ dance? She that makes dainty,²²

20 She I'll swear hath corns.²³ Am I come near²⁴ ye now?

(to Maskers) Welcome, gentlemen. I have seen the day

That I have worn a visor²⁵ and could tell

A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,

Such as would please. 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.

25 You are welcome, gentlemen. Come, musicians, play.

MUSIC. THEY DANCE

A hall, a hall!²⁶ Give room! And foot it,²⁷ girls.

14 (1) lively, (2) cheerily

15 quick, active

16 for a short time

17 the longer liver take all = enjoy yourselves, make the most of the present
(proverbial)

18 not cursed/afflicted

19 walk a bout = move/make a turn/circuit

20 my mistresses = my ladies ("mistress": polite form of address)

21 deny to = refuse to

22 reluctant, disinclined

23 bunions

24 am I come near = have I come close to/ reached/ touched

25 mask

26 a hall! = make room, clear the floor

27 foot it = on with the dancing

More light, you knaves,²⁸ and turn the tables up,²⁹
 And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.
 (to Capulet Old Man) Ah, sirrah, this unlooked-for sport³⁰
 comes³¹ well.

Nay, sit, nay sit, good cousin Capulet, 30
 For you and I are past our dancing days.
 How long is't now since last yourself and I
 Were in a mask?³²

Second Capulet By'r Lady, thirty years.

Capulet What, man? 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much. 35
 'Tis since the nuptial³³ of Lucentio,
 Come Pentecost³⁴ as quickly as it will,³⁵
 Some five-and-twenty years, and then we masked.

Second Capulet 'Tis more, 'tis more. His³⁶ son is older, sir,
 His son is thirty.

Capulet Will you tell me that?
 His son was but a ward³⁷ two years ago. 40

Romeo (to *Servingman*) What lady's that, which doth
 enrich³⁸ the hand³⁹
 Of yonder knight?

28 male servants

29 turn the tables up = lift the flat tops off their supporting trestles/sawhorses,
 and stack them against the wall

30 entertainment, amusement, recreation

31 presents itself, arrives, happens, turns out

32 were in a mask = (1) wore a mask, (2) were at a masquerade dance

33 wedding

34 seventh Sunday after Easter ("Whitsuntide")

35 wants to

36 Lucentio's son

37 under age twenty-one, a minor

38 decorate, adorn

39 (the man's hand holding hers, presumably, in the course of dancing)

Servingman I know not, sir.

Romeo O she doth teach the torches to burn⁴⁰ bright.

45 It seems she hangs upon⁴¹ the cheek of night
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear⁴² –
 Beauty too rich⁴³ for use,⁴⁴ for earth too dear.⁴⁵
 So shows⁴⁶ a snowy dove trooping⁴⁷ with crows
 As yonder lady o'er⁴⁸ her fellows shows.
 50 The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand⁴⁹
 And, touching hers,⁵⁰ make blessèd my rude hand.
 Did my heart love till now? Forswear⁵¹ it, sight.
 For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.⁵²

Tybalt This, by his voice, should be a Montague.

55 (to *Servant*) Fetch me my rapier,⁵³ boy. What, dares the slave
 Come hither, covered with an antic⁵⁴ face,
 To flier⁵⁵ and scorn⁵⁶ at our solemnity?⁵⁷
 Now by the stock⁵⁸ and honor of my kin,

40 to burn = how properly to burn

41 hangs upon = is suspended on, decorates

42 (bright/glistening objects are seen more vividly against a dark background)

43 great, exalted, noble, splendid, fine, luxurious

44 for use = to be used/usefully employed

45 (1) precious, valuable, costly, (2) scarce, unusual

46 appears/is displayed/seen/exhibited

47 that flocks/gathers/associates with

48 higher than, beyond, in preference/comparison to

49 her place of stand = where she stands

50 her hand

51 renounce, repudiate

52 (for I ne'er SAW true BEAUty TILL this NIGHT)

53 light, sharp-pointed sword

54 grinning, fantastic (Romeo's mask)

55 jeer, gibe, laugh contemptuously

56 treat with ridicule, mock

57 ceremony, special formality, festival

58 line of descent, pedigree, genealogy

- To strike him dead I hold⁵⁹ it not a sin.
- Capulet* Why, how now, kinsman? Wherefore storm⁶⁰ you so? 60
- Tybalt* Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,
A villain that is hither come in spite⁶¹
To scorn at our solemnity this night.
- Capulet* Young Romeo is it?
- Tybalt* 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.
- Capulet* Content thee,⁶² gentle coz, let him alone. 65
'A bears him like a portly⁶³ gentleman,
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-governed⁶⁴ youth.
I would not for the wealth of all this town
Here in my house do him disparagement.⁶⁵ 70
Therefore be patient, take no note of him.
It is my will, the which if thou respect,
Show a fair presence⁶⁶ and put off these frowns,
An ill-beseeming semblance⁶⁷ for a feast.
- Tybalt* It fits when such a villain is a guest. 75
I'll not endure him.
- Capulet* He shall be endured.
What, goodman boy!⁶⁸ I say he shall. Go to!⁶⁹

59 think, consider, believe*

60 wherefore storm = why* rage

61 envious malice/hatred, contemptuously

62 content thee = be satisfied

63 dignified

64 well-governed = reasonable

65 dishonor, indignity

66 appearance, bearing, demeanor

67 appearance

68 (used for people of rank lower than gentleman; "boy" also is deliberately insulting)

69 come on! (exclamation of incredulity and disapproval)

Am I the master here, or you? Go to!

You'll not endure him? God shall mend my soul!⁷⁰

80 You'll make a mutiny⁷¹ among my guests,

You will set cock-a-hoop,⁷² you'll be the man!⁷³

Tybalt Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.⁷⁴

Capulet Go to, go to!

You are a saucy⁷⁵ boy. Is't so,⁷⁶ indeed?

This trick⁷⁷ may chance to scathe⁷⁸ you. I know what.⁷⁹

85 You must contrary⁸⁰ me! Marry, 'tis time –

(*to Dancers*) Well said, my hearts!⁸¹—(*to Tybalt*) You are a
princox,⁸² go

Be quiet, or – (*to Servingmen*) More light, more light! – (*to
Tybalt*) For shame!

I'll make you quiet. What! – (*to Dancers*) Cheerly, my hearts!

Tybalt Patience perforce⁸³ with wilful choler⁸⁴ meeting

90 Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.⁸⁵

70 God shall mend my soul! = May God purify my soul! (emphatic exclamation)

71 quarrel, disturbance

72 set cock-a-hoop = cast off all restraint, set everything by the ears

73 be the man! = be in charge, give the orders

74 disgrace, dishonor

75 insolent, presumptuous*

76 is't so? = is that the way it is?

77 prank, mischief, frolic

78 hurt, injure, damage

79 I know what = I understand what I'm doing, I'm not a fool/incompetent (I know WHAT) (and you don't!)

80 oppose, strive against (conTRARY)

81 (term of endearment)

82 conceited young man

83 (1) forcibly, (2) of necessity, under compulsion*

84 wilful choler = obstinately self-willed/irrational/perverse temper/anger

85 in their different greeting = because of the totally unlike and clashing natures of patience and choler

I will withdraw. But this intrusion⁸⁶ shall,
 Now seeming sweet, convert to⁸⁷ bitt' rest gall.⁸⁸

EXIT

- Romeo* If I profane⁸⁹ with my unworthiest hand
 This holy shrine,⁹⁰ the gentle sin is this:
 My lips, two blushing⁹¹ pilgrims,⁹² ready stand 95
 To smooth that⁹³ rough touch with a tender⁹⁴ kiss.
- Juliet* Good pilgrim, you do wrong⁹⁵ your hand too much,
 Which⁹⁶ mannerly devotion⁹⁷ shows in this,
 For saints⁹⁸ have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
 And palm to palm is holy palmers'⁹⁹ kiss. 100
- Romeo* Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?
- Juliet* Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.
- Romeo* O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.
 They pray: grant thou,¹⁰⁰ lest faith turn to despair.
- Juliet* Saints do not move,¹⁰¹ though grant for prayers' 105

86 (Romeo's uninvited presence)

87 convert to = turn into

88 (1) rancor, (2) poison, venom

89 desecrate, pollute, treat irreverently

90 (her hand – which, as he had earlier said he would, he is now holding)

91 (1) reddish in color, (2) modest

92 (like religious pilgrims, he has sought out a sacred place)

93 (his own)

94 soft, gentle

95 (verb)

96 and that

97 mannerly devotion = decent/ moral/ modest and devout reverence/
 impulse/observance/prayer

98 (1) holy persons, (2) those who are among the chosen, (3) statues of saints

99 pilgrims'

100 grant thou = that prayer (that I may kiss your lips)

101 (1) commence, start, (2) speak, (3) become agitated, disturbed, (4) move (if
 "saints" means a statue)

sake.¹⁰²

Romeo Then move not while my prayer's effect¹⁰³ I take.

Thus from my lips, by thine my sin is purged.¹⁰⁴ (*kisses her*)

Juliet Then¹⁰⁵ have my lips the sin that they have took.

Romeo Sin from my lips? O trespass¹⁰⁶ sweetly urged!¹⁰⁷

Give me my sin again. (*kisses her*)

110 *Juliet* You kiss by th' book.¹⁰⁸

Nurse Madam, your mother craves¹⁰⁹ a word with you.

Romeo What¹¹⁰ is her mother?

Nurse Marry, bachelor,¹¹¹

Her mother is the lady of the house,

And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous.

115 I nursed her daughter that you talked withal.¹¹²

I tell you, he that can lay hold of her

Shall have the chinks.¹¹³

Romeo Is she a Capulet?

O dear account.¹¹⁴ My life is my foe's debt.¹¹⁵

102 though grant for prayer's sake = though they may, in response to a prayer, grant what is requested

103 result

104 cleansed, purified, absolved

105 as a result, now

106 sin, fault, wrong (noun)

107 brought forward, presented, stated

108 (1) book of manners, (2) book of sonnets (till the moment he kisses her, their dialogue is a sonnet)

109 (1) demands, claims by authority/right, (2) requests, (3) wants*

110 who

111 young gentleman

112 with

113 money (that which "chinks": coins – there being no paper money)

114 dear account = costly/dire/grievous reckoning

115 (she is his "foe," but his life is owed to her)

Benvolio Away, be gone, the sport is at the best.¹¹⁶
Romeo Ay, so I fear: the more is my unrest.¹¹⁷ 120
Capulet Nay, gentlemen, prepare not¹¹⁸ to be gone.
 We have a trifling foolish¹¹⁹ banquet¹²⁰ towards.¹²¹
(they whisper in his ear) Is it e'en so? Why then, I thank you all,
 I thank you, honest¹²² gentlemen. Good night.
(to Servingmen) More torches here! *(Maskers leave)* Come on
 then, let's to bed. 125
 Ah, sirrah, by my fay,¹²³ it waxes¹²⁴ late.
 I'll to my rest.

EXEUNT ALL BUT JULIET AND NURSE

Juliet Come hither, Nurse. What is yond gentleman?¹²⁵
Nurse The son and heir of old Tiberio.
Juliet What's he that now is going out of door? 130
Nurse Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.
Juliet What's he that follows there, that would not dance?
Nurse I know not.
Juliet Go ask his name. — *(to herself)* If he be married,
 My grave is like¹²⁶ to be my wedding bed. 135
Nurse His name is Romeo, and a Montague,

116 see act I, scene 4, note 52

117 turmoil

118 prepare not = don't ready yourselves

119 trifling foolish = insignificant/petty/humble

120 small repast/meal

121 on the way

122 honorable*

123 faith (a common exclamation)

124 grows

125 yond gentleman = that distant gentleman (over there)

126 likely

The only son of your great enemy.

Juliet My only love, sprung from my only hate.

Too early seen unknown, and known too late.

140 Prodigious¹²⁷ birth of love it is to me

That I must love a loathèd enemy.

Nurse What's this? what's this?

Juliet A rhyme I learnt even now

Of one I danced withal.

A CALL WITHIN: JULIET

Nurse Anon, anon!

Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.

EXEUNT

127 (1) ominous, unnatural, monstrous, (2) astonishing, amazing

Act 2



PROLOGUE

ENTER CHORUS

Chorus Now old desire¹ doth in his² deathbed lie,
And young affection gapes³ to be his⁴ heir.
That fair⁵ for which love groaned for and would die,⁶
With tender Juliet matched⁷ is now not fair.
Now Romeo is beloved, and loves again,
Alike⁸ bewitchèd by the charm of looks,⁹
But to his foe¹⁰ supposed¹¹ he must complain¹²

5

1 old desire = Romeo's former love

2 its

3 is eager

4 its

5 Rosaline

6 would die = (1) wished to die, (2) wished for sexual orgasm

7 compared

8 both Romeo and Juliet

9 (once again, see act 1, scene 2, note 47)

10 (1) enemy, as a Capulet, (2) female beloved, in Renaissance love poetry

11 erroneously believed (referring to meaning 1, in note 10, just above)

12 lament, moan, mourn (in a literary sense)

And she steal¹³ love's sweet bait¹⁴ from fearful hooks.¹⁵
 Being held¹⁶ a foe, he may not have access
 10 To breathe¹⁷ such vows as lovers use to¹⁸ swear,
 And she as much in love, her means¹⁹ much less
 To meet her new belovèd anywhere.
 But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
 Tempering²⁰ extremities with extreme sweet.

EXIT

13 take secretly

14 allurement, temptation

15 fearful hooks = dreadful/terrible snares, traps

16 believed to be

17 speak, passionately utter/whisper

18 use to = customarily

19 resources, possibilities for action*

20 mingling, modifying

SCENE I

*A lane outside the wall of Capulet's orchard*²¹

ENTER ROMEO

Romeo Can I go forward²² when my heart is here?
 Turn back, dull earth,²³ and find thy center²⁴ out.²⁵

HE CLIMBS THE WALL AND LEAPS DOWN THE OTHER SIDE

ENTER BENVOLIO AND MERCUTIO

Benvolio Romeo! My cousin Romeo! Romeo!

Mercutio He's wise,
 And, on my life, hath stol'n²⁶ him home to bed.

Benvolio He ran this way, and leapt this orchard wall. 5
 Call, good Mercutio.

Mercutio Nay, I'll conjure²⁷ too.
 (*loudly*) Romeo! Humors! Madman! Passion! Lover!
 Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh.
 Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied.
 Cry but "Ay me!" Pronounce but "love" and "dove." 10
 Speak to my gossip²⁸ Venus one fair word,
 One nickname for her purblind²⁹ son and heir,

21 garden

22 go forward = move on

23 earth = Romeo's body (humans having been created from earth/dust)

24 she around whom his life revolves (Juliet)

25 find . . . out = search for

26 gone secretly

27 (1) invoke magically sacred names, (2) beseech

28 intimate/chatty friend

29 totally blind

- Young Abraham³⁰ Cupid, he that shot so trim³¹
 When King Cophetua³² loved the beggar maid.
 15 (*pause*) He³³ heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not.
 The ape is dead,³⁴ and I must conjure him.
 (*loudly*) I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
 By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,
 By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
 20 And the demesnes³⁵ that there adjacent³⁶ lie,
 That in thy likeness thou appear to us!
Benvolio An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.
Mercutio This cannot anger him.'Twould anger him
 To raise a spirit³⁷ in his mistress' circle³⁸
 25 Of some strange nature, letting it there stand³⁹
 Till she had laid it⁴⁰ and conjured it down.⁴¹
 That were some⁴² spite. My invocation
 Is fair and honest: in his mistress' name,

30 young Abraham = young old

31 fine, beautifully

32 ("King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid" = old ballad in which a king, hostile to love, is looking out the window at a beggar maid, when Cupid, "The blinded boy, that shoots so trim," hits the king with an arrow. Cophetua falls in love and eventually marries the beggar girl. See Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1:189–94. The king's name is pronounced coFETya)

33 Romeo

34 ape is dead = Romeo is playing dead, as performing apes were trained to do

35 borders (usually used for land, territories: diMEENZ)

36 bordering, close by (meaning, here, "genitalia")

37 (1) supernatural being, demon (2) vital power, penis

38 (1) magic circle, used for conjuring, (2) genitalia

39 be erect (bawdy)

40 laid it = (1) set it to rest (2) had sexual intercourse with it

41 (1) back to hell, (2) no longer erect (bawdy)

42 considerable

- I conjure only but to raise up him.⁴³
- Benvolio* Come, he hath hid himself among these trees 30
 To be consorted⁴⁴ with the humorous⁴⁵ night.
 Blind is his love and best befits⁴⁶ the dark.
- Mercutio* If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
 Now will he sit under a medlar⁴⁷ tree
 And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit 35
 As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.⁴⁸
 O Romeo, that she were, O that she were
 An open arse,⁴⁹ thou⁵⁰ a pop'rin pear!⁵¹
 Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed.⁵²
 This field bed is too cold for me to sleep. 40
 Come, shall we go?
- Benvolio* Go then, for 'tis in vain
 To seek him here that means not to be found.

EXEUNT

43 (bawdy)

44 united, in harmony

45 moody, capricious

46 suited for

47 a kind of apple, edible only when ripe enough to burst; thought to resemble female genitalia

48 (with no men present)

49 (1) medlar fruit, (2) posterior, rump ("arse" = British form of "ass")

50 and you were

51 a kind of pear, shaped like a penis

52 truckle bed = bed on castors/wheels

SCENE 2
Capulet's orchard

ENTER ROMEO

Romeo He¹ jests at scars that² never felt a wound.

ENTER JULIET ABOVE, AT A WINDOW

(*quietly*) 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,

5 Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.

Be not her maid,³ since she is envious.

Her vestal livery⁴ is but sick⁵ and green,⁶

And none but fools⁷ do wear it. Cast it off.

10 It is my lady!⁸ O it is my love.

O that she knew she were.⁹

She speaks,¹⁰ yet she says nothing. What of that?

Her eye discourses:¹¹ I will answer it.

I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks.

15 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

1 Mercutio: Romeo hears him from the other side of the wall

2 who

3 be not her maid = (1) don't serve her, (2) don't remain a virgin

4 vestal livery = virginal clothing, servants' uniform*

5 pale, wan

6 ("green sickness" = anemia common to pubescent young women)

7 court jesters, who wore green and yellow coats

8 adored woman (chivalric term)

9 was my lady

10 is affecting/expressive

11 speaks, talks

Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres¹² till they return.
 What if her eyes were there,¹³ they¹⁴ in her head?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
 As daylight doth a lamp. Her eyes in heaven 20
 Would through the airy region stream so bright
 That birds would sing and think it were¹⁵ 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 Ay me.

Romeo She speaks. 25

O speak again,¹⁶ bright angel, for thou art
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,¹⁷
 As is a wingèd messenger¹⁸ of heaven
 Unto the white upturnèd wond'ring eyes
 Of mortals that fall back¹⁹ to gaze on him, 30
 When he bestrides²⁰ the lazy puffing²¹ clouds
 And sails upon the bosom²² of the air.

Juliet O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore²³ art thou Romeo?

12 (in Ptolemaic astronomy, stars were contained in spheres)

13 in the sky

14 the stars

15 (subjunctive)

16 (Romeo is still talking, quietly, to himself only)

17 (Juliet is at her window, which is "above" stage level)

18 wingèd messenger = angel

19 fall back = retreat, step back

20 he bestrides = the angel mounts/rides on

21 sending out wisps/vapors (some texts have "pacing")

22 surface

23 wherefore art thou = why are you (named)

Deny²⁴ thy father and refuse thy name.

35 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn²⁵ my love
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.²⁶

Romeo (aside) Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Juliet 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy:

Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.

40 What's Montague? It is nor²⁷ hand nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O be some other name.²⁸

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name²⁹ would smell as sweet.

45 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear³⁰ perfection which he owes³¹
Without that title.³² Romeo, doff³³ thy name,
And for³⁴ that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Romeo (speaking to her) I take thee at thy word.

50 Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized,
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

24 renounce, disavow, repudiate

25 (once Romeo swears that he is her love, and intends to marry her, she will consider herself married)

26 (since a married woman takes her husband's name)

27 neither

28 beLONGing to a MAN o BE some OTHer NAME ("to a" are partly elided words, just barely syllables)

29 (some texts have "word")

30 noble, glorious*

31 possesses, owns

32 name

33 lay aside, get rid of

34 in place/instead of

Juliet What man³⁵ art thou that, thus bescreened³⁶ in night,
So stumblest on³⁷ my counsel?³⁸

Romeo By a name

I know not how to tell thee who I am.

My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,

55

Because it is an enemy to thee.

Had I it written, I would tear³⁹ the word.

Juliet My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance,⁴⁰ yet I know the sound.

Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

60

Romeo Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.⁴¹

Juliet How cam'st 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.

65

Romeo With love's light wings did I o'erperch⁴² these walls,

For stony limits⁴³ cannot hold love out,

And what love can do, that dares love attempt.

Therefore thy kinsmen are no let⁴⁴ to me.

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

70

Romeo Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye

Than twenty of their swords. Look thou but sweet,

35 what man = who

36 hidden from sight, covered in darkness

37 stumblest on = comes upon accidentally/by chance

38 private musing

39 take away/remove by force/violence

40 UTrance

41 offend, displease

42 fly over

43 boundaries

44 barrier, stop (some texts have "stop")

And I am proof⁴⁵ against their enmity.

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

75 *Romeo* I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight,

And but⁴⁶ thou love me, let them find me here.

My life were better ended by their hate

Than death proruèd,⁴⁷ wanting of⁴⁸ thy love.

Juliet By whose direction⁴⁹ found'st thou out this place?

80 *Romeo* By love, that first did prompt⁵⁰ me to inquire.

He⁵¹ lent me counsel,⁵² and I lent him eyes.

I am no pilot,⁵³ yet wert thou as far⁵⁴

As that vast shore washed with⁵⁵ the farthest sea,

I would adventure⁵⁶ for such merchandise.

85 *Juliet* Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,

Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek

For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.

Fain⁵⁷ would I dwell on form⁵⁸ – fain, fain deny

What I have spoke. But farewell compliment.⁵⁹

90 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “Ay,”

45 impenetrable, invulnerable

46 if only

47 deferred, postponed

48 wanting of = lacking, without

49 guidance, giving of directions

50 incite, urge, inspire

51 Love/Cupid

52 advice

53 steersman, helmsman, versed in local navigation

54 far away

55 (1) washed with = bathed/wet by/beat upon by, (2) adjoining, touching

56 take the chance/the risk, venture*

57 gladly*

58 dwell on form = linger/insist on formality/decorum/etiquette

59 ceremony, politeness

And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear'st,
 Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,
 They say Jove⁶⁰ laughs. O gentle Romeo,
 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.⁶¹
 Or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won, 95
 I'll frown, and be perverse,⁶² and say thee nay,
 So⁶³ thou wilt woo.⁶⁴ But else,⁶⁵ not for the world.
 In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,⁶⁶
 And therefore thou mayst think my havior⁶⁷ light,⁶⁸
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true⁶⁹ 100
 Than those that have more cunning⁷⁰ to be strange.⁷¹
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,
 But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,⁷²
 My true love⁷³ passion. Therefore pardon me,
 And not impute this yielding to light love, 105
 Which⁷⁴ the dark night hath so discovered.⁷⁵
Romeo Lady, by yonder blessèd moon I swear,

60 king of the gods

61 in truth, sincerely

62 stubborn, difficult

63 in order that

64 court me

65 otherwise

66 foolishly tender, over-affectionate, doting*

67 behavior, conduct, deportment

68 wanton, frivolous, not to be respected

69 faithful, reliable, steadfast*

70 capacity, skill

71 distant, reserved, cold

72 aware, conscious

73 (adjective)

74 this love which

75 uncovered, disclosed, revealed

That tips⁷⁶ with silver all these fruit tree tops –

Juliet O swear not by the moon, th' inconstant⁷⁷ moon,
 110 That monthly changes in her circled orb,⁷⁸
 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 gracious⁷⁹ self,
 Which is the god of my idolatry,⁸⁰
 And I'll believe thee.

115 *Romeo* If my heart's dear love –

Juliet Well, do not swear. Although I joy⁸¹ in thee,
 I have no joy of this contract⁸² tonight.
 It is too rash,⁸³ too unadvised,⁸⁴ too sudden,
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
 120 Ere one can say "It lightens."⁸⁵ Sweet, good night.
 This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
 May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
 Good night, good night. As⁸⁶ sweet repose and rest
 Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

125 *Romeo* O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

76 adorns

77 frequently changing/altering

78 circled orb = circular orbit

79 charming, attractive

80 idol worship

81 rejoice, delight, exult

82 mutual agreement (conTRACT)

83 hasty, impetuous, rapid

84 spoken without proper thought/reflection

85 flashes

86 the same, equal

Juliet What satisfaction⁸⁷ canst thou have tonight?

Romeo Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

Juliet I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,

And yet I would⁸⁸ it were⁸⁹ to give again.

Romeo Would'st thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love? 130

Juliet But to be frank⁹⁰ and give it thee again.

And yet I wish but for the thing I have.

My bounty⁹¹ is as boundless as the sea,

My love as deep. The more I give to thee,

The more I have, for both⁹² are infinite. 135

I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!

NURSE CALLS WITHIN

Anon, good Nurse! – Sweet Montague, be true.

Stay but a little, I will come again.

EXIT JULIET

Romeo O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,

Being in night, all this is but a dream, 140

Too flattering⁹³ sweet to be substantial.⁹⁴

ENTER JULIET ABOVE

87 gratification of desire (Juliet consistently shows a keen awareness of sexual realities)

88 wish

89 still remained

90 generous, lavish

91 generosity, liberality

92 what I have and what I give

93 pleasingly, pleasurable

94 real (subSTANTiAL)

Juliet Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.⁹⁵

If that thy bent⁹⁶ of love be honorable,

Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,

145 *By one that I'll procure⁹⁷ to come to thee,*

Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,

And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay

And follow thee my lord⁹⁸ throughout the world.

Nurse (*within*) Madam!

150 *Juliet* I come, anon. – But if thou meanest not well,

I do beseech thee –

Nurse (*within*) Madam!

Juliet By and by⁹⁹ I come –

To cease thy suit and leave me to my grief.

Tomorrow will I send.

Romeo So thrive¹⁰⁰ my soul –

Juliet A thousand times good night.

EXIT JULIET

155 *Romeo* A thousand times the worse, to want¹⁰¹ thy light.

Love goes toward love as schoolboys from¹⁰² their books,

But love from¹⁰³ love, towards school¹⁰⁴ with heavy looks.

ENTER JULIET ABOVE

95 really, positively

96 disposition, inclination

97 contrive, cause, get

98 husband (with the clear sense of “head of the household”)

99 by and by = immediately, at once

100 flourish, prosper

101 lack*

102 go away from

103 away from

104 as schoolboys go

- Juliet* Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falconer's¹⁰⁵ voice
 To lure this tassel-gentle¹⁰⁶ back again.
 Bondage¹⁰⁷ is hoarse¹⁰⁸ and may not speak aloud, 160
 Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies¹⁰⁹
 And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
 With repetition of my Romeo's name.
 Romeo!
- Romeo* (*to himself*) It is my soul that calls upon my name. 165
 How silver sweet sound¹¹⁰ lovers' tongues by night,
 Like softest music to attending ears.
- Juliet* Romeo!
- Romeo* My niese.¹¹¹
- Juliet* What o'clock tomorrow
 Shall I send to thee?
- Romeo* By the hour of nine.
- Juliet* I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then. 170
 I have forgot why I did call thee back.
- Romeo* Let me stand here till thou remember it.
- Juliet* I shall forget, to have¹¹² thee still stand there,
 Rememb'ring how I love thy company.
- Romeo* And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget, 175
 Forgetting any other home but this.
- Juliet* 'Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone,

105 keeper/trainer/hunter with falcons/hawks (who must call so high-flying birds can hear)

106 male falcon, nobler than a mere goshawk

107 restriction (as a young unmarried woman)

108 pitched low, not clear/smooth

109 (See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, book 3)

110 (verb)

111 falcon/hawk too young to have flown (some texts have "nyas")

112 to have = in order to have

And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,¹¹³
 That lets it hop a little from his hand,
 180 Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,¹¹⁴
 And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
 So loving¹¹⁵ jealous of his¹¹⁶ liberty.

Romeo I would I were thy bird.

Juliet Sweet, so would I.

Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.¹¹⁷
 185 Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow
 That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

EXIT

Romeo Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast.
 Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet¹¹⁸ to rest.
 Hence will I to my ghostly father's¹¹⁹ close cell,¹²⁰
 190 His help to crave¹²¹ and my dear hap¹²² to tell.

EXIT

113 wanton's bird = the pet of a playful/spoiled child

114 fetters, shackles, irons

115 (adjective)

116 its

117 pampering, caressing

118 (adverb)

119 spiritual guide/confessor

120 close cell = secluded room, small living quarters

121 request, ask/beg for

122 fortune, luck

SCENE 3

Friar Laurence's cell

ENTER FRIAR, ALONE, WITH A BASKET

Friar ¹The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
 Check'ring² the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
 And fleckèd³ darkness like a drunkard reels
 From forth⁴ day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.⁵
 Now, ere the sun advance⁶ his burning eye 5
 The day to cheer and night's dank⁷ dew to dry,
 I must up fill this osier cage⁸ of ours
 With baleful weeds⁹ and precious juicèd flowers.¹⁰
 The earth that's nature's mother is her¹¹ tomb.
 What is her¹² burying grave,¹³ that is her¹⁴ womb, 10
 And from her womb children of divers kind
 We¹⁵ sucking on her natural¹⁶ bosom find,
 Many for many virtues¹⁷ excellent,

1 (some texts conclude act 2, scene 2, with the first four lines)

2 marking like a checker- or chessboard

3 dappled, spotted

4 from forth = away from, out of

5 Titan's fiery wheels = the burning wheels of the sun god's chariot

6 move forward, raise, uplift

7 injuriously damp

8 container of woven willow twigs

9 baleful weeds = deadly/destructive/malignant herbs

10 precious juicèd flowers = flowers containing valuable juices

11 nature's

12 nature's

13 place

14 the earth's

15 (the verb of which "we" is the subject is "find")

16 normal, ordinary

17 qualities, properties

None but for some, and yet all different.
 15 O mickle¹⁸ is the powerful grace¹⁹ that lies
 In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities,²⁰
 For naught so vile²¹ that on the earth doth live
 But to the earth some special good doth give,
 Nor aught so good but, strained²² from that fair use,
 20 Revolts²³ from true birth,²⁴ stumbling on²⁵ abuse.
 Virtue itself turns²⁶ vice, being misapplied,
 And vice sometime²⁷ by action dignified.²⁸
 Within the infant rind²⁹ of this small flower
 Poison hath residence,³⁰ and medicine power,³¹
 25 For this, being smelt, with that part³² cheers each part,³³
 Being³⁴ tasted, stays³⁵ all senses with³⁶ the heart.
 Two such opposèd³⁷ kings encamp them³⁸ still

18 much, great

19 wholesome virtue/efficacy

20 capacities, natures

21 wretched, repulsive

22 distorted, pressed, corrupted

23 departs

24 true birth = its correct/real/right/legitimate origin/lineage

25 stumbling on = falling into

26 turns into

27 is sometimes

28 action dignified = what it does is raised/exalted

29 infant rind = new/early stage of the peel/skin/membrane

30 hath residence = is contained

31 medicine power = medical remedies have strength/active capacity

32 quality ("scent")

33 cheers = that quality (its odor) comforts/cures/enlivens everything (all portions)

34 but being

35 stops

36 following on/along with its stopping

37 adverse, hostile

38 encamp them = settle/lodge themselves

In man as well as herbs – grace and rude will³⁹ –
 And where the worser is predominant⁴⁰
 Full⁴¹ soon the canker⁴² death eats up that plant.

30

ENTER ROMEO

Romeo Good morrow, father.

Friar Benedicite!⁴³

What early⁴⁴ tongue so sweet⁴⁵ saluteth⁴⁶ me?
 (*recognizing Romeo*) Young son, it argues⁴⁷ a distempered⁴⁸
 head

So soon to bid good morrow⁴⁹ to thy bed.

Care⁵⁰ keeps his watch⁵¹ in every old man's eye,

35

And where care lodges sleep will never lie,

But where unbruised⁵² youth with unstuffed⁵³ brain

Doth couch⁵⁴ his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.

Therefore thy earliness doth me assure

39 God's grace and rough/raw human longing/passion (GRACE and rude WILL)

40 (the WORser IS preDOMinant)

41 very

42 ulcerish decay

43 bless you! (BENeDiciTAY)

44 early in the morning

45 (adverb)

46 greets

47 indicates, proves

48 disturbed, troubled

49 morning (greeting it as one leaves it for the new day)

50 sorrow

51 vigilance, wakefulness

52 undamaged (as yet) by life

53 not yet swarming full

54 lie down

- 40 Thou art uproused with⁵⁵ some distemperature.⁵⁶
 Or if not so,⁵⁷ then here I hit it right –
 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?
- 45 *Romeo* With Rosaline, my ghostly father? No.
 I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.⁵⁸
- Friar* That's my good son! But where hast thou been then?⁵⁹
- Romeo* I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.
 I have been feasting⁶⁰ with mine enemy,
 50 Where on a sudden one⁶¹ hath wounded me
 That's by me wounded. Both our remedies⁶²
 Within thy help and holy physic⁶³ lies.
 I bear no hatred, blessèd man, for – lo! –
 My intercession⁶⁴ likewise steads⁶⁵ my foe.
- 55 *Friar* Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.⁶⁶
 Riddling⁶⁷ confession finds⁶⁸ but riddling shrift.
- Romeo* Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set

55 uproused with = awakened by

56 disorder of mind or body (thou ART upROUSED with SOME disTEMperTURE)

57 (Romeo perhaps indicates that this is not the case)

58 grief, lamentation

59 (but WHERE hast THOU been THEN)

60 enjoying myself, celebrating, partying

61 someone

62 cures

63 healing knowledge/art

64 my intercession = what I am asking you for

65 profits, helps

66 homely in thy drift = simple/everydaylike in your meaning*

67 puzzling, enigmatic, ambiguous

68 meets with

On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.
 As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,
 And all combined,⁶⁹ save what thou must combine 60
 By holy marriage. When, and where, and how
 We met, we wooed and made exchange of vow,
 I'll tell thee as we pass.⁷⁰ But this I pray,
 That thou consent to marry us today.
Friar Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here. 65
 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.
 Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine⁷¹
 Hath washed thy sallow⁷² cheeks for Rosaline. 70
 How much salt water thrown away in waste
 To season⁷³ love, that of it doth not taste.
 The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,⁷⁴
 Thy old groans ring yet in mine ancient ears.
 Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit 75
 Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.
 If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
 Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.
 And art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence⁷⁵ then:
 Women may fall when there's no strength in men. 80

69 unified, agreed upon

70 proceed, walk along

71 salt water (tears)

72 sickly yellowish

73 flavor, make savory

74 removes

75 judgment, wise maxim/saying

Romeo Thou chid'st⁷⁶ me oft for loving Rosaline.

Friar For doting,⁷⁷ not for loving, pupil mine.

Romeo And bad'st me bury love.

Friar Not in a grave

To lay one in, another out to have.

85 *Romeo* I pray thee chide not. She whom I love now

Doth grace⁷⁸ for grace and love for love allow.⁷⁹

The other did not so.

Friar O she knew well

Thy love did read by rote,⁸⁰ that could not spell.

But come, young waverer,⁸¹ come go with me.

90 In one respect I'll thy assistant be,

For this alliance may so happy⁸² prove

To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

Romeo O let us hence! I stand on⁸³ sudden haste.

Friar Wisely, and slow.⁸⁴ They stumble that run fast.

EXEUNT

76 scolded*

77 displaying excessive/foolish/infatuated emotion

78 favor

79 approve of, accept

80 memory

81 shifter back and forth, vacillator

82 lucky, fortunate

83 stand on = insist on

84 wisely, and slow = it is better to proceed wisely and slowly

SCENE 4

A street

ENTER BENVOLIO AND MERCUTIO

Mercutio Where the devil should this Romeo be? Came he not home tonight?¹

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. 5

Benvolio Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet, hath sent a letter to his father's house.

Mercutio A challenge, on my life.

Benvolio Romeo will answer it.

Mercutio Any man that can write may answer a letter. 10

Benvolio Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how² 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 pin³ of his heart cleft⁴ with⁵ the blind bow boy's butt shaft⁶ – and is he a man to encounter Tybalt? 15

Benvolio Why, what is Tybalt?

Mercutio More than Prince of Cats.⁷ O he's the courageous

1 last night

2 how he dares, being dared = saying in what manner/means he undertakes, having been challenged

3 peg/nail at the center of a target

4 split

5 by

6 thick arrow used in target shooting

7 (Tibert, in the Old French *Renard the Fox* [trans. Patricia Terry], is “prince” of cats as Renard is “prince” of foxes; both the medieval tale and *Romeo and Juliet* are brilliantly echoed in S.V. Benet's story “The King of the Cats”)

captain⁸ of compliments.⁹ He fights as you sing pricksong¹⁰
 20 – keeps time, distance, and proportion:¹¹ rests me his minim
 rests,¹² one, two, and the third in your bosom!¹³ The very
 butcher of a silk button,¹⁴ a duelist, a duelist, a gentleman of
 the very first house,¹⁵ of the first and second cause.¹⁶ Ah, the
 immortal passado,¹⁷ the punto reverso,¹⁸ the hay!¹⁹

25 *Benvolio* The what?

Mercutio The pox of²⁰ such antic, lipping, affecting
 fantasticoes²¹ – these new tuners of accent!²² “By Jesu, a very
 good blade! a very tall²³ man! a very good whore!” Why, is

8 chief, prince (in modern military usage, a “general”)

9 dueling courtesies, Italian style

10 written music, as opposed to that sung from memory or by ear (pricks = musical notes set to paper; prick (verb) = to stab, run through)

11 (1) metrical/musical rhythm/harmony, (2) melodic line

12 his minim rests = takes/makes the shortest possible rests/pauses (minim in Renaissance musical notation is what is today called a half note)

13 one, two, and the third in your bosom! = (1) then it's one, two, three – and all over!, or (2) he makes one feint, pauses, then another feint, pauses again, and then runs you through!

14 butcher of a silk button = so accurate that he can slice off a button

15 one whose life is governed by the first of the twelve astrological houses, the first being the ascendant or most important of all

16 first and second cause = primary reasons for fighting a duel: first, accusation of serious crime, second, honor

17 immortal passado = heavenly/famous thrust, sword and one foot moving forward at the same time*

18 backhand thrust

19 hay! = Italian *hai* (*avere*, “to have”), “you’ve got it!” – exclaimed when a thrust hits home

20 the pox of = the plague on (in modern English, “damn such . . .”)

21 antic, . . . affecting fantasticoes (some texts have “phantasimes”) = grotesque/bizarre/uncouth/ludicrous . . . full of affectation absurd/irrational people

22 tuners of accent! = adjusters of how we speak!

23 active, proper, brave

not this a lamentable thing, grandsir,²⁴ that we should be thus
 afflicted with these strange flies,²⁵ these fashion mongers,²⁶ 30
 these pardon me's,²⁷ who stand so much on the new form²⁸
 that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench?²⁹ O their
 bones, their bones!³⁰

ENTER ROMEO

Benolio Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo!

Mercutio Without his roe,³¹ like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, 35
 how art thou fishified!³² Now is he for³³ the numbers³⁴ that
 Petrarch flowed in.³⁵ Laura,³⁶ to³⁷ his lady,³⁸ was but a
 kitchen wench – marry, she had a better love³⁹ to berhyme
 her – ⁴⁰ Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy,⁴¹ Helen and

24 grandfather

25 insignificant insects/flatterers

26 dealers, traffickers

27 people who constantly excuse themselves, in the Continental (very un-English) manner

28 style, model (“form” also = bench)

29 old bench = old style plain/hard wooden seat

30 their bones! = their delicate rear ends aching because of hard wood (there may also be a reference to a link between fashionable men and the “bone ache,” as venereal disease was known)

31 without his roe = (1) deprived of his sperm, like a male fish (2) take the letters “r,” “o,” and “e” out of “Romeo” and you get, more or less, “meo” or “o me,” which are typical lovers’ cries

32 dried out, after a night of sexual activity

33 ready for

34 poetry, then exclusively metrical (which means “measurement”)

35 flowed in = glided along in (see act 1, scene 1, note 47)

36 Petrarch’s beloved

37 compared to

38 Romeo’s lady, thought by Mercutio to be Rosaline

39 lover

40 Dido, Cleopatra, Helen, Hero, and Thisbe (THIZbee) are all compared to Rosaline; gypsies were believed to have come from Egypt

41 cheating hussies, dark skinned to boot

40 Hero⁴² hildings and harlots,⁴³ Thisbe⁴⁴ a gray eye or so,⁴⁵ but
not to the purpose.⁴⁶ (*to Romeo*) Signior Romeo, bon jour.
There's a French salutation to your French slop.⁴⁷ You gave
us the counterfeit fairly⁴⁸ last night.

Romeo Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give
45 you?

Mercutio The slip,⁴⁹ sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?⁵⁰

Romeo Pardon, good Mercutio. My business was great, and in
such a case as mine a man may strain⁵¹ courtesy.

Mercutio That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a
50 man to bow in the hams.⁵²

Romeo Meaning, to curtsy.

Mercutio Thou hast most kindly⁵³ hit it.

Romeo A most courteous⁵⁴ exposition.

Mercutio Nay, I am the very pink⁵⁵ of courtesy.

55 *Romeo* Pink for flower.

Mercutio Right.

42 beloved of Leander (see Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander")

43 hildings and harlots = jades/baggages and whores

44 beloved of Pyramus; they both die

45 a gray eye or so = all of them just females with gray eyes

46 to the purpose = relevant

47 clothing

48 gave us the counterfeit fairly = really/fully deceived us

49 (1) evasion/escape, (2) a counterfeit coin

50 think/imagine it

51 contract, diminish, restrain

52 limits/afflicts a man in bowing the backs of his thighs/knees (your "great business" was sexual, and your thighs/knees are weary from it)

53 (1) naturally, characteristically, (2) sympathetically, pleasantly

54 (curtsy-ess)

55 (1) decorative hole punched in clothing/shoes, (2) rapier thrust, (3) flower,
(4) finest example

Romeo Why, then is my pump⁵⁶ well flowered.

Mercutio Sure⁵⁷ wit, follow me⁵⁸ this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump, that,⁵⁹ when the single⁶⁰ sole of it is worn,⁶¹ the jest may remain, after the wearing,⁶² solely singular.⁶³ 60

Romeo O single soled⁶⁴ jest, solely singular⁶⁵ for the singleness.⁶⁶

Mercutio Come between us,⁶⁷ good Benvolio! My wits faint.⁶⁸

Romeo Swits⁶⁹ and spurs,⁷⁰ swits and spurs, or I'll cry a match.⁷¹ 65

Mercutio Nay, if our wits run the wild goose chase,⁷² I am done,⁷³ for thou hast more of the wild goose in one of thy wits⁷⁴ than, I am sure, I have in my whole five. Was I with⁷⁵

56 shoe

57 steadfast

58 me in

59 so that

60 poor, contemptible, thin

61 worn out

62 (1) being used, worn, (2) exhausting, wearing away

63 solely singular = (1) all alone, (2) a singular/unique sole

64 single soled = poor soled/souled

65 solely singular = only unique/superior

66 simplicity, naïveté

67 come between us = help me by stopping these punning exchanges, as would a second in a duel

68 wits faint = brain gives way/swoons

69 switches, whips

70 use whips and spurs on your faltering mind/steed

71 cry a match = announce/claim that the match is over ("I win!")

72 wild goose chase = a follow the leader race that could lead anywhere, and was therefore risky

73 finished, used up, worn out

74 faculties, senses (tasting, smelling, hearing, seeing, feeling)

75 alongside, together with/equal to

you there for the goose?⁷⁶

70 *Romeo* Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast
not there for the goose.⁷⁷

Mercutio I will bite thee by the ear⁷⁸ for that jest.

Romeo Nay, good goose,⁷⁹ bite not!⁸⁰

Mercutio Thy wit is a very bitter sweetening,⁸¹ it is a most sharp⁸²
75 sauce.⁸³

Romeo And is it not, then, well served in to⁸⁴ a sweet goose?

Mercutio O here's a wit of cheveril,⁸⁵ that stretches from an inch
narrow to an ell⁸⁶ narrow to an ell broad.

Romeo I stretch it⁸⁷ out for that word "broad," which, added to
80 the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.⁸⁸

Mercutio (*happily*) Why, is not this⁸⁹ better now than groaning for
love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo, now art
thou what thou art, by art⁹⁰ as well as by nature. For this
driveling love is like a great natural⁹¹ that runs lolling⁹² up

76 (1) the popular board game, "fox and geese," (2) the eating of the prize
goose, after a contest

77 (1) eating the flesh, (2) enjoying the prostitute

78 bite thee by the ear = nibble affectionately on your ear

79 simpleton

80 nay, good goose, bite not = a mock cry: "Oh spare me, terrible creature!"

81 (1) sweetness, sweet flavoring, (2) type of apple often eaten with goose

82 (1) keen, (2) cutting, (3) pungent, caustic

83 (1) sauce, (2) sauciness, impertinence

84 well served in to = properly served with (since sweet dishes go best with
pungent sauces)

85 of cheveril = made of kid leather, pliant and easily stretched

86 inches

87 my wit

88 broad goose = plain/obvious/outstanding/vulgar/indecant simpleton

89 this contest of wits

90 skill, learning*

91 half-wit, born fool/idiot

92 lazily

- and down to hide his bauble⁹³ in a hole.⁹⁴ 85
- Benvolio* Stop there, stop there!
- Mercutio* Thou desirest me to stop⁹⁵ in my tale⁹⁶ against the hair.⁹⁷
- Benvolio* Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.⁹⁸
- Mercutio* O thou art deceived! I would have made it short,⁹⁹ for 90
I was come to the whole depth¹⁰⁰ of my tale, and meant indeed to occupy the argument¹⁰¹ no longer.
- Romeo* Here's goodly gear!¹⁰²

ENTER NURSE AND HER MAN PETER, AT THE OPPOSITE
END OF THE STAGE

- Mercutio* A sail, a sail!¹⁰³
- Benvolio* Two, two. A shirt and a smock.¹⁰⁴ 95
- Nurse* Peter.
- Peter* Anon.
- Nurse* My fan, Peter.
- Mercutio* ¹⁰⁵Good Peter, to hide her face, for her fan's the fairer

93 toy, worthless/paltry object/thing

94 (1) by burying it, (2) by inserting his thing/penis in a woman's vagina

95 (1) cease, (2) plug, stuff (verb)

96 (1) tale, (2) tail/penis

97 against the hair = (1) contrary to my inclination/its natural direction, (2) up against female genital hair

98 tale large = (1) story long, (2) tail/penis large, (3) licentious, improper, gross

99 (1) a short tale, (2) a small tail/penis

100 (1) tale's profundity, sagacity, (2) tail/penis's depth

101 occupy the argument = take possession of the subject/woman

102 here's goodly gear = *either* (1) this kind of talk is first-class stuff, *or* (2) (of the Nurse and Peter) here come good toys/stuff/doings

103 the Nurse, a large woman, appears on the horizon like an approaching ship

104 a shirt and a smock = a man and a woman

105 (it is not clear whether this is an aside, to his friends, or is spoken aloud for Peter and the Nurse to hear)

100 face¹⁰⁶ of the two.

Nurse God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mercutio God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.

Nurse Is it good den?¹⁰⁷

Mercutio 'Tis no less, I tell ye, for the bawdy¹⁰⁸ hand of the dial is
105 now upon the prick¹⁰⁹ of noon.

Nurse Out upon you.¹¹⁰ What¹¹¹ a man are you?

Romeo One, gentlewoman, that God hath made, Himself to
mar.¹¹²

Nurse By my troth,¹¹³ it is well said. "For himself to mar,"
110 quoth¹¹⁴ 'a? 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 fault¹¹⁵ of a worse.

115 *Nurse* You say well.

Mercutio Yea, is the worst well? Very well took,¹¹⁶ i' faith.
Wisely, wisely.

Nurse If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence¹¹⁷ with you.

Benvolio She will endite¹¹⁸ him to some supper.

106 (fans often bore painted faces)

107 is it good den? = is it evening?

108 (1) soiled, dirty, (2) lewd, obscene

109 (1) mark on a dial, (2) penis

110 out upon you = (modern usage) come on!

111 what kind of

112 God hath made, Himself to mar = God created man in his image, and man
spoils that image

113 by my troth = by my faith

114 says

115 lack

116 understood, grasped

117 (1) confidential communication? (2) uneducated mistake for "conference"?

118 deliberate mistake for "invite": Benvolio thinks/wants to think
"confidence" (see note 117) is an error

Mercutio A bawd, a bawd, a bawd!¹¹⁹ So ho!¹²⁰ 120

Romeo (to *Mercutio*) What hast thou found?

Mercutio No hare, sir, unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie,¹²¹ that is something stale and hoar¹²² ere it be spent.¹²³

HE WALKS BY THEM AND SINGS

An old hare hoar,¹²⁴ 125

And an old hare hoar,

Is very good meat in Lent,

But a hare that is hoar

Is too much for a score¹²⁵

When it hoars¹²⁶ ere it be spent.¹²⁷

Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner thither. 130

Romeo I will follow you.

Mercutio Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, (*singing*) "lady, lady, lady."¹²⁸

EXEUNT MERCUTIO AND BENVOLIO

119 (1) dialect word for "hare;" (2) a procurer/whorehouse proprietor

120 expression used in hunting hares, when a hare is located

121 (in which there should be no meat)

122 something stale and hoar = rather stale and aged (because Lent lasts forty days and a hare pie would be long since moldy, if kept – unrefrigerated – for any longish period)

123 consumed, used up

124 (1) gray haired, (2) whore (homonym)

125 for a score = (1) excessive, unreasonable, (2) a record of drinks served, in an ale house (bar, saloon)

126 ages

127 be spent = (1) is used up/exhausted, (2) results in an orgasm

128 (refrain from "The Ballad of Constant Susanna": "A woman fair and virtuous / Lady, lady . . ." See Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1:209–10)

- 135 *Nurse* Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant¹²⁹
was this that was so full of his ropery?¹³⁰
- Romeo* A gentleman, Nurse, that loves to hear himself talk and
will speak more in a minute than he will stand to¹³¹ in a
month.
- 140 *Nurse* An 'a speak anything against me, I'll take him down,¹³²
an 'a were lustier¹³³ than he is, and twenty such jacks.¹³⁴ And
if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave!¹³⁵ I am
none of his flirt gills,¹³⁶ I am none of his skains mates.¹³⁷ (*to*
Peter) And thou must stand by, too, and suffer¹³⁸ every knave
145 to use me at his pleasure!¹³⁹
- Peter* I saw no man use¹⁴⁰ you at his pleasure. If I had, my
weapon¹⁴¹ should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I
dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion¹⁴² in a
good quarrel,¹⁴³ and the law on my side.
- 150 *Nurse* Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me
quivers. Scurvy knave! (*to Romeo*) Pray you, sir, a word, and as

129 shopkeeper, tradesman (insulting, when applied to a "gentleman")

130 knavery, tricks

131 stand to = act upon

132 take him down = (1) rebuke, reprimand, (2) humiliate ("take him down a
peg")

133 (1) stronger, (2) more confident

134 low fellows, knaves

135 scurvy knave = worthless/contemptible/low/badmannered rascal/
rogue*

136 flirt gills = women of loose/light behavior

137 skains mates = cut-throat companions ("skain" = long Irish knife)

138 allow, tolerate

139 at his pleasure = as he pleases

140 have sexual intercourse with

141 (1) sword, (2) penis

142 (1) favorable circumstances, good reason, (2) pretext, excuse

143 cause, reason

I told you, my young lady bid me enquire you out. What she bid me say, I will keep to myself, but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a 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.¹⁴⁴ 155

Romeo Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee – 160

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

Romeo What wilt thou tell her, Nurse? Thou dost not mark¹⁴⁵ me.

Nurse I will tell her, sir, that you do protest,¹⁴⁶ which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.¹⁴⁷ 165

Romeo Bid her devise¹⁴⁸

Some means to come to shrift this afternoon,
And there she shall at Friar Laurence¹⁴⁹ cell
Be shrived¹⁵⁰ and married. Here is¹⁵¹ for thy pains. 170

Nurse No, truly, sir; not a penny.

Romeo Go to! I say you shall. (*she takes the offered gratuity*)

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

144 weak dealing = feeble, immoral business

145 pay attention to*

146 declare/affirm/vow in solemn terms

147 proposal of marriage

148 plan, think out, contrive*

149 (the original printed texts of the play agree on "Friar Laurence cell." Modern editors add an apostrophe after Laurence: Laurence'. This preserves the prosody but introduces a form unknown in English)

150 given penance and absolution, after confession

151 is something

Romeo And stay, good Nurse, behind the abbey wall.

175 Within this hour my man shall be with thee
 And bring thee cords¹⁵² made like a tackled stair,¹⁵³
 Which to the high topgallant¹⁵⁴ of my joy
 Must be my convoy¹⁵⁵ in the secret night.
 Farewell. Be trusty,¹⁵⁶ and I'll quit¹⁵⁷ thy pains.

180 Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse Now God in heaven bless thee. Hark¹⁵⁸ you, sir.

Romeo What say'st thou, my dear Nurse?

Nurse Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,
 Two may keep counsel, putting one away?¹⁵⁹

185 *Romeo* I warrant thee my man's as true as steel.

Nurse Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord!

 When 'twas¹⁶⁰ a little prating¹⁶¹ thing – O there is a
 nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife
 aboard,¹⁶² but she, good soul, had as lief¹⁶³ see a toad, a
 190 very¹⁶⁴ toad, as see him. I anger her sometimes, and tell her
 that Paris is the properer¹⁶⁵ man, but I'll warrant you, when I

152 ropes

153 tackled stair = ladder made of ropes

154 the top of a ship's tallest mast

155 guidance, protection

156 trustworthy, reliable

157 reward, repay

158 listen

159 putting one away = removing/getting rid of/sending away one of the two

160 she was

161 chattering

162 lay knife aboard = set his weapon (sexual allusion) on her

163 as lief = rather

164 honest to God

165 more worthy, better looking

say so, she looks as pale as any clout¹⁶⁶ in the versal¹⁶⁷ world.

Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?

Romeo Ay, Nurse. What of that? Both with an R?

Nurse Ah, mocker! That's the dog's name. R¹⁶⁸ is for the – No, 195

I know. It begins with some other letter, and she hath the prettiest sententious¹⁶⁹ of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

Romeo Commend me to thy lady.¹⁷⁰

Nurse Ay, a thousand times. 200

EXIT ROMEO

Peter!

Peter Anon.

Nurse Before, and apace.¹⁷¹

EXEUNT

166 scrap of cloth, rag

167 whole, universal

168 sound of a dog growling?

169 aphoristic (terse, proverbial) way of speech

170 (a polite dismissal)

171 before, and apace = go in front of me, and quickly

SCENE 5
Capulet's orchard

ENTER JULIET

Juliet The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse;

In half an hour she promised to return.

Perchance¹ she cannot meet² him. That's not so.

O she is lame.³ Love's heralds⁴ should be thoughts,

5 Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams

Driving back shadows over lowering⁵ hills.

Therefore do nimble-pinioned⁶ doves draw Love,⁷

And therefore hath⁸ the wind-swift⁹ Cupid wings.

Now is the sun upon the highmost hill

10 Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve

Is three long hours,¹⁰ yet she is not come.

Had she affections¹¹ and warm youthful blood

She would be as swift in motion as a ball.

My words would bandy¹² her to my sweet love,

15 And his to me.

1 perhaps

2 find

3 infirm, halting, crippled

4 messengers

5 dark, threatening (bisyllabic; the first syllable rhymes with "out" or "ouch")

6 nimble-pinioned = quick/agile/light-winged

7 draw Love = pull the chariot of Venus

8 likewise/also has

9 wind-swift = (compound adjective) swift as wind

10 (bisyllabic: OWerz)(again, rhymes with FLOWerz)

11 feelings, emotions, passions

12 strike, hit (from tennis)*

But old folks, many feign as¹³ 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.

20

EXIT PETER

Juliet Now, good sweet Nurse – O Lord, why look'st thou sad?
Though news be sad, yet tell them¹⁴ merrily.
If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news
By playing it¹⁵ to me with so sour a face.

Nurse I am aweary, give me leave¹⁶ awhile.

25

Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunce¹⁷ have I!

Juliet I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.

Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good Nurse, speak.

Nurse Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile?

Do you not see that I am out of breath?

30

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.¹⁸

Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.

35

13 feign as = act as if they believe themselves, pretend to be

14 ("news" = plural)

15 (the music)

16 give me leave = please leave me alone

17 prancing (like a horse obliged to do tricks)

18 decline/beg off from doing, with apologies/explanations

Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.¹⁹

Let me be satisfied: is't good or bad?

Nurse Well, you have made a simple²⁰ choice. You know not
 how to choose a man. Romeo? No, not he. Though his face
 40 be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's, and for
 a hand and a foot, and a body, though they be not²¹ to be
 talked 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.²² Serve God. What, have you dined at home?

45 *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 as²³ it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back o' t' other side – ah, my back, my back!

50 Beshrew²⁴ your heart for sending me about

To catch my death with jauncing 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,
 55 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?”

19 details of time, place, manner, and so on

20 dismal, worthless, stupid

21 not worthy, poor, dismal, silly, foolish

22 girl

23 as if

24 hang, a curse on*

- Nurse* O God's Lady dear! 60
 Are you so hot?²⁵ Marry come up,²⁶ I trow.²⁷
 Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
 Henceforward do your messages yourself.
- Juliet.* Here's such a coil!²⁸ Come, what says Romeo?
- Nurse.* Have you got leave²⁹ to go to shrift to-day? 65
- Juliet.* I have.
- Nurse.* Then hie³⁰ you hence to Friar Laurence cell.
 There stays a husband to make you a wife.
 Now comes the wanton³¹ blood up in your cheeks:
 They'll be in scarlet straight³² at any news. 70
 Hie you to church, I must³³ another way
 To fetch a ladder, by the which your love
 Must climb a bird's nest soon when it is dark.
 I am the drudge, and toil³⁴ in your delight,
 But you shall bear the burden³⁵ soon at night.³⁶ 75
 Go, I'll to dinner. Hie you to the cell.
- Juliet* Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell.

EXEUNT

25 feverish, excited, lustful

26 marry come up = well, hoity toity

27 it seems to me

28 confusion, fuss

29 permission

30 hurry

31 (1) wild, skittish, (2) lascivious, lewd

32 without delay, immediately

33 must go/proceed

34 work hard

35 load: (1) the work, (2) have the weight of a man on you

36 at night = tonight, this night

SCENE 6

Friar Laurence's cell

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND ROMEO

Friar So smile the heavens upon this holy actThat afterhours¹ with sorrow chide us not.*Romeo* Amen, amen. But come what² sorrow can,³It cannot countervail⁴ the exchange of joy⁵

5 That one short minute gives me in her sight.

Do thou but close⁶ our hands with holy words,

Then love-devouring death do what he dare –

It is enough I may but call her mine.

Friar These violent⁷ delights have violent ends10 And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,⁸

Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey

Is loathsome in his own deliciousness

And in the taste confounds⁹ the appetite.

Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so.

15 Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

ENTER JULIET

Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot

Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.¹⁰

1 hours yet to come, the future

2 whatever

3 can do

4 match, equal

5 exchange of joy = mutual joy, joy given and received

6 unite, bind (verb)

7 vehement, very strong/intense

8 gunpowder

9 destroys, ruins

10 ground paved with stone

A lover may bestride the gossamer¹¹
 That idles¹² in the wanton summer air,
 And yet not fall, so light¹³ is vanity.¹⁴ 20

Juliet Good even to my ghostly confessor.¹⁵

Friar Romeo shall thank thee,¹⁶ daughter, for us both.

ROMEO KISSES HER

Juliet As much to him,¹⁷ else is his thanks too much.

JULIET KISSES ROMEO

Romeo Ah, Juliet, if the measure¹⁸ of thy joy
 Be heaped like mine, and that¹⁹ thy skill be more 25
 To blazon²⁰ it, then sweeten with thy breath²¹
 This neighbor²² air, and let rich music's tongue
 Unfold²³ the imagined²⁴ happiness that both
 Receive in either²⁵ by this dear encounter.²⁶

Juliet Conceit²⁷ more rich in matter than in words 30

11 filmy spiderwebs

12 lazes (verb)

13 inconsequential, of no importance, of very little weight

14 foolishness, worldly pleasure (which are the same, to Friar Laurence)

15 (CONfesSOR)

16 with a kiss

17 as much to him = I must give as much to him

18 measuring utensil/cup

19 if

20 (1) depict, paint, (2) boast of, proclaim

21 sweeten with thy breath = speak words in

22 nearby, adjoining, surrounding

23 disclose, make clear

24 prospective, future

25 both receive in either = we both of us receive

26 dear encounter = glorious/noble meeting

27 idea, conception★

Brag of his substance,²⁸ not of ornament.
 They are but beggars that²⁹ can count their worth.
 But my true love is³⁰ grown to such excess
 I cannot sum up sum³¹ of half my wealth.

35 *Friar* Come, come with me, and we will make short work,
 For, by your leaves,³² you shall not stay³³ alone
 Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.

EXEUNT

28 his substance = its reality

29 those who

30 has

31 sum up sum = sum up (verb) the sum (noun)

32 by your leaves = with the permission of you both

33 remain, be left

Act 3



SCENE I

A public place

ENTER MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, AND MEN

Benvolio I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire.¹

The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,²

And if we meet, we shall not scape³ a brawl,

For now, these hot days, is the mad⁴ blood stirring.

Mercutio Thou art like one of these fellows that, when he enters
the confines of a tavern, claps me⁵ his sword upon the table
and says "God send me⁶ no need of thee!" and by the
operation⁷ of the second cup⁸ draws him⁹ on the drawer,¹⁰

1 leave, withdraw

2 are out and about

3 escape

4 mad blood = frenzied, foolish, extravagantly reckless emotions

5 sets/bangs noisily

6 God send me = may God not send me

7 working

8 drink

9 draws him = draws his weapon

10 tapster, bar man

when indeed there is no need.

10 *Benvolio* Am I like such a fellow?

Mercutio Come, come, thou art as hot a jack¹¹ in thy mood as any in Italy; and as soon moved to be moody,¹² and as soon moody to be moved.

Benvolio And what to?

15 *Mercutio* Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly,¹³ for one would kill the other. Thou! Why, thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for racking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast
20 hazel¹⁴ eyes. What eye but such an eye would spy out¹⁵ such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat,¹⁶ and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle¹⁷ as an egg for quarreling. Thou hast quarreled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that
25 hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet¹⁸ before Easter,¹⁹ with another for tying his new shoes with an old riband?²⁰ And yet thou wilt²¹ tutor²² me from quarreling!

11 man

12 (1) haughty, stubborn, angry, (2) melancholy, sullen

13 speedily, quickly

14 the reddish brown color of a ripe hazelnut

15 spy out = discover, seek out

16 edible matter, food

17 crazy, confused

18 close-fitting body garment, ancestor of modern coats and jackets

19 (the fashion season began at Easter)

20 ribbon

21 want to

22 teach, instruct (verb)

Benvolio An I were so apt²³ to quarrel as thou art, any man
should buy the fee simple²⁴ of my life for an hour and a
quarter.²⁵ 30

Mercutio The fee simple? O simple!²⁶

ENTER TYBALT AND OTHERS

Benvolio By my head, here come the Capulets.

Mercutio By my heel,²⁷ I care not.

Tybalt (to other Capulets) Follow me close, for I will speak to
them. 35

Gentlemen, good den. A word with one of you.

Mercutio And but 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. 40

Mercutio Could you not take some occasion without giving?²⁸

Tybalt Mercutio, thou consortest²⁹ with Romeo.

Mercutio Consort? What, dost thou make us minstrels?³⁰ An
thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but
discords.³¹ (*indicates his sword*) Here's my fiddlestick,³² here's 45

23 ready, prepared, prompt*

24 fee simple = complete and unconditional ownership (usually of land)

25 for an hour and a quarter = for the brief period my life, were I that
quarrelsome, could be expected to last

26 O simple! = what an awful/pitiful metaphor

27 foot (scornful)

28 without giving = without being given one

29 associate, keep company

30 musicians

31 dissonances, quarrels

32 fiddlestick = violin bow

that³³ shall make you dance. Zounds,³⁴ consort!

Benvolio We talk here in the public haunt³⁵ of men.

Either withdraw unto some private place

And reason coldly³⁶ of your grievances,

50 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 no³⁷ man's pleasure.

ENTER ROMEO

Tybalt Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.³⁸

Mercutio But I'll be hanged,³⁹ sir, if he wear⁴⁰ your livery.

55 Marry, go before to field,⁴¹ he'll be your follower.⁴²

Your worship⁴³ in that sense may call him man.

Tybalt Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford⁴⁴

No better term than this: thou art a villain.

Romeo Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee

60 Doth much excuse the appertaining⁴⁵ rage

To such a greeting. Villain am I none.

Therefore farewell. I see thou knowest me not.

33 that which

34 God's wounds (imprecation)

35 place

36 reason coldly = discuss/converse/argue calmly

37 any

38 (1) the man I'm looking for, (2) servant

39 I'll be hanged = I'll be damned

40 wears

41 go before to field = if you lead the way to the dueling field

42 be your follower = (1) he'll follow you, (2) then he'll be your "servant" (do the courteous thing)

43 your worship = a gentleman/man of high honor like you (sarcastic)

44 supply, furnish (since he in fact feels *no* love for Romeo)

45 proper, appropriate

- Tybalt* Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries
That thou hast done me. Therefore turn and draw.
- Romeo* I do protest I never injured thee, 65
But love thee better than thou canst devise,⁴⁶
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love.
And so good Capulet, which name I tender⁴⁷
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.
- Mercutio* O calm, dishonorable, vile submission! 70
*Alla stoccata*⁴⁸ carries it away. (*he draws*)
Tybalt, you ratcatcher,⁴⁹ will you walk?⁵⁰
- Tybalt* What wouldst thou have⁵¹ with me?
- Mercutio* Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.
That I mean to make bold withal and, as⁵² you shall use⁵³ me 75
hereafter, dry beat⁵⁴ the rest of the eight. Will you pluck⁵⁵
your sword out of his pilcher⁵⁶ by the ears?⁵⁷ Make haste, lest
mine be about⁵⁸ your ears ere it be out.
- Tybalt* I am for you. (*he draws*)
- Romeo* Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up. 80

46 conceive, imagine

47 cherish, regard

48 *alla stoccata* = fencing thrust: that is, Tybalt (Italian dueling term: *stoccata* = stab, thrust)

49 (as cats are ratcatchers)

50 step aside, withdraw (to fight a duel)

51 do (though Mercutio chooses to understand it, literally, as “have”)

52 according to how

53 deal with, behave toward

54 dry beat = beat soundly/severely*

55 pull, snatch (negative usage)

56 scabbard (contemptuous)

57 hilt (which protrudes on either side more or less like ears: a contemptuous metaphor)

58 all around

Mercutio (to *Tybalt*) Come, sir, your *passado*!

THEY FIGHT

Romeo Draw, Benvolio, beat down their weapons.

Gentlemen, for shame! Forbear⁵⁹ this outrage!⁶⁰

Tybalt, *Mercutio*! The Prince expressly hath

85 Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.

Hold, *Tybalt*! Good *Mercutio*!

TYBALT UNDER ROMEO'S ARM STABS MERCUTIO
AND FLIES WITH HIS FOLLOWERS

Mercutio I am hurt.

A plague⁶¹ o' both your houses. I am sped.⁶²

Is he gone and hath nothing?

Benvolio What, art thou hurt?

Mercutio Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch. Marry, 'tis enough.

90 Where is my page? (to *Page*) Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.⁶³

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

95 you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered,⁶⁴ I warrant, for
this world. A plague o' both your houses. Zounds, a dog, a rat,

59 give up, cease, abstain from

60 rashness, foolhardiness, mad/passionate behavior, insolence

61 curse, divine punishment

62 finished, killed

63 medical man

64 ruined, killed

a mouse, a cat, to scratch⁶⁵ 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, 100
 Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses.
 They have made worms' meat of me. I have it,⁶⁶
 And soundly too. Your houses!

EXIT, SUPPORTED BY BENVOLIO

Romeo This gentleman, the Prince's near ally,⁶⁷
 My very friend, hath got this mortal hurt 105
 In my behalf – my reputation stained
 With Tybalt's slander⁶⁸ – Tybalt, that an hour⁶⁹
 Hath been my kinsman. O sweet Juliet,
 Thy beauty hath made me effeminate
 And in my temper⁷⁰ softened valor's steel.⁷¹ 110

ENTER BENVOLIO

Benvolio O Romeo, Romeo, brave⁷² Mercutio's dead,
 That gallant⁷³ spirit hath aspired⁷⁴ the clouds,
 Which too untimely here did scorn⁷⁵ the earth.

65 (1) injure with claws/nails, (2) skirmish, fight without doing serious harm

66 (modern usage: "I've had it")

67 kindred, relation (ally)

68 insult, malicious defamation/falsehood

69 that an hour = who for one hour

70 (1) character, temperament, (2) the tempering/hardening of steel

71 valor's steel = the toughness of courage/manliness

72 noble, splendid

73 excellent, fine

74 risen/soared/mounted to

75 defied, disdained

Romeo This day's black fate⁷⁶ on moe days⁷⁷ doth depend.⁷⁸

115 This⁷⁹ but begins the woe others⁸⁰ must end.

ENTER TYBALT

Benvolio Here comes the furious⁸¹ Tybalt back again.

Romeo Alive in triumph, and Mercutio slain?

Away to heaven respective lenity,⁸²

And fire-eyed fury be my conduct⁸³ now!

120 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.

125 *Tybalt* Thou wretched boy, that didst consort him⁸⁴ here,
Shalt with him hence.

Romeo (*drawing his sword*) This shall determine that.

THEY FIGHT. TYBALT FALLS

Benvolio Romeo, away, be gone.

The citizens are up,⁸⁵ and Tybalt slain.

Stand not amazed.⁸⁶ The Prince will doom thee⁸⁷ death

76 what is destined to happen, destiny

77 moe days = more days, later times

78 doth depend = (1) is contingent upon, (2) will follow from

79 this day

80 other days

81 raging, violent

82 respective lenity = courteous/careful / civil mildness/gentleness

83 guidance

84 with him

85 are up = have risen, are excited/roused

86 bewildered, stunned

87 doom thee = sentence★ you to (verb)

If thou art taken.⁸⁸ Hence, be gone, away! 130

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 Up,⁸⁹ sir, go with me. 135

I charge⁹⁰ thee in the Prince's name obey.

ENTER PRINCE, ATTENDED, OLD MONTAGUE, CAPULET,
THEIR WIVES, AND OTHERS

Prince Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

Benvolio O noble Prince, I can discover⁹¹ all

The unlucky manage⁹² of this fatal brawl.

There lies the man, slain by young Romeo, 140

That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

Lady Capulet Tybalt, my cousin. O my brother's child!

O Prince, O husband, O the blood is spilled

Of my dear kinsman. Prince, as thou art true,

For blood of ours shed blood of Montague. 145

O cousin, cousin.

Prince Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

88 caught, captured, seized*

89 come

90 command

91 make known, disclose

92 actions, conduct

Benvolio Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.
 Romeo, that spoke him fair,⁹³ bid him bethink⁹⁴
 150 How nice⁹⁵ the quarrel was, and urged withal⁹⁶
 Your high displeasure.⁹⁷ All this – utterèd⁹⁸
 With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed –
 Could not take truce⁹⁹ with the unruly spleen¹⁰⁰
 Of Tybalt, deaf to peace, but that he tilts¹⁰¹
 155 With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,
 Who, all as hot, turns¹⁰² deadly point to point,
 And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
 Cold death aside and with the other sends
 It¹⁰³ back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
 160 Retorts¹⁰⁴ it. Romeo he cries¹⁰⁵ 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 thrust from Tybalt hit the life
 165 Of stout¹⁰⁶ Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled,
 But by and by comes back to Romeo,

93 courteously

94 remember

95 foolish, senseless, trivial*

96 in addition, besides

97 high displeasure = exalted/grave anger

98 your HIGH disPLEAsure ALL this UTterED

99 take truce = make peace

100 unruly spleen = disorderly/ungovernable hot/irritable/capricious temper

101 thrusts/strikes at

102 returns, sends back

103 cold death (his own sword point)

104 replies/returns in kind

105 Romeo he cries = Romeo cries

106 proud, brave, formidable

Who had but newly entertained¹⁰⁷ revenge,
 And to't¹⁰⁸ they go like lightning, for, ere I
 Could draw¹⁰⁹ to part them, was stout Tybalt slain
 And as he fell did Romeo turn and fly.¹¹⁰ 170
 This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

Lady Capulet He is a kinsman to the Montague.
 Affection¹¹¹ makes him false, he speaks not true.
 Some twenty of them fought in this black¹¹² strife,
 And all those twenty could but kill one life. 175
 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 price¹¹³ of his dear¹¹⁴ blood doth owe?
Montague Not Romeo, Prince. He was Mercutio's friend. 180
 His fault concludes but what 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 hate's proceeding,
 My blood¹¹⁵ for your rude brawls doth lie ableeding. 185
 But I'll amerce¹¹⁶ you with so strong¹¹⁷ a fine

107 considered

108 to't (to it) = set to it, attack, fight

109 draw his sword

110 flee

111 (1) kind feeling, (2) bias, partiality

112 foul

113 payment, cost

114 precious

115 my blood = my family's blood, Mercutio being his kinsman

116 punish

117 powerful, massive, severe, heavy

That you shall all repent the loss of mine.

I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;

Nor¹¹⁸ tears nor prayers shall purchase out¹¹⁹ abuses.

190 Therefore use none. Let Romeo hence¹²⁰ in haste,

Else, when he is found, that hour¹²¹ is his last.

Bear hence¹²² this body, and attend¹²³ our¹²⁴ will.

Mercy but murders, pardoning¹²⁵ those that kill.

EXEUNT

118 neither

119 purchase out = redeem

120 go away (go hence)

121 (bisyllabic: AWe)

122 away

123 pay heed to

124 my (the royal “we”)

125 PARDning

SCENE 2

Capulet's orchard

ENTER JULIET

Juliet Gallop apace,¹ you fiery-footed² steeds,
 Towards Phoebus' lodging.³ Such a wagoner⁴
 As Phaeton⁵ would whip you to the west
 And bring in cloudy night immediately.
 Spread thy close⁶ curtain, love-performing⁷ night, 5
 That runaway⁸ eyes may wink,⁹ and Romeo
 Leap to these arms untalked of and unseen.
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
 By their own beauties, or, if love be blind,
 It best agrees with¹⁰ night. Come, civil¹¹ night, 10
 Thou sober-suited¹² matron, all in black,
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,¹³
 Played for a pair¹⁴ of stainless¹⁵ maidenhoods.

1 swiftly

2 fiery-footed = glowingly hot-footed (as the horses of Phoebus, the sun god, properly are)

3 dwelling (back to their stable, so it will be night)

4 driver (merry, light tone)

5 (sun god's wild-driving son)

6 (1) secret, (2) snug

7 love-performing (compound adjective)

8 gadding about? night wandering?

9 close

10 best agrees with = is most harmonious with, most favorable to

11 polite, well governed, sober

12 sober-suited = dressed soberly

13 lose a winning match = lose virginity but win (1) a husband/mate, (2) the contest

14 (Juliet and Romeo are both virgins)

15 unblemished, pure

Hood¹⁶ my unmanned¹⁷ blood, bating¹⁸ in my cheeks,
 15 With thy black mantle,¹⁹ till strange²⁰ love, grown bold,²¹
 Think true love acted simple modesty.²²
 Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come, thou day in night,²³
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
 Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.
 20 Come, gentle night. Come, loving, black-browed night,
 Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die²⁴
 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
 25 And pay no worship to the garish²⁵ sun.²⁶
 O I have bought²⁷ the mansion²⁸ of a love
 But not possessed it, and though I am sold,²⁹
 Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day

16 cover (as young, untrained falcons/hawks are hooded to keep them calm)

17 (1) untrained, not broken in, (2) not subjected to/occupied/possessed by a man

18 fluttering, beating

19 (1) loose, sleeveless cloak, (2) blanket

20 unknown, unfamiliar

21 (1) fearless, (2) without shame

22 think true love acted simple modesty = thinks genuine love performed/represented innocent purity/chastity ("strange love" is the subject of "think")

23 day in night = brightness in darkness

24 (the Elizabethan meaning, sexual climax/orgasm, is plainly most on her mind)

25 gaudy, vulgar, ostentatious

26 ("Take him . . . the garish sun": these four lines make no sense unless Romeo is understood to "die" exactly as Juliet expects to; the verb "take" – which can mean "captivate" as well as "capture," and also has the meaning of "sexually possessing" – then has as its subject the glories that night will bring them)

27 by marriage (both a sacrament *and* a contract)

28 splendid human body (as the mansion "house" inhabited by the soul)

29 I am sold = I, too, as Romeo is, have been sold/acquired in this mutual rite of acquisition

As is the night before some festival
 To an impatient child that hath new robes³⁰ 30
 And may not wear them. O here comes my Nurse.

ENTER NURSE, WITH LADDER OF CORDS

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 Ay, ay, the cords. 35

SHE THROWS THEM DOWN

Juliet Ay me, what news? Why dost thou wring thy hands

Nurse Ah, weraday!³¹ He's dead, he's dead, he's dead!

We are undone,³² lady, we are undone.

Alack the day! He's gone, he's killed, he's dead.

Juliet Can heaven be so envious?³³

Nurse Romeo can, 40

Though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo,

Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!

Juliet What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?

This torture should be roared in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but "Ay," 45

And that bare vowel "Ay" shall poison more

Than the death darting³⁴ eye of cockatrice.³⁵

I am not I, if there be such an "Ay,"

30 clothes

31 welladay, alas*

32 ruined, destroyed

33 spiteful, malicious, full of ill will

34 shooting

35 poisonous monster/serpent that can kill by a glance

- Or those eyes³⁶ shut that make thee answer “Ay.”
 50 If he be slain, say “Ay,” or if not, “no.”
 Brief³⁷ sounds determine of³⁸ my weal³⁹ or woe.
- Nurse* I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,
 (God save the mark!)⁴⁰ here on his manly breast.
 A piteous corse,⁴¹ a bloody piteous corse,
 55 Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed⁴² in blood,
 All in gore⁴³ blood. I swounded⁴⁴ at the sight.
- Juliet* O break,⁴⁵ my heart. Poor bankrupt, break at once.
 To prison, eyes, ne'er look on liberty.
 Vile earth,⁴⁶ to earth resign,⁴⁷ end motion⁴⁸ here,
 60 And thou and Romeo press⁴⁹ one heavy bier.⁵⁰
- 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?
 65 Is Romeo slaughtered, and is Tybalt dead?
 My dear loved cousin, and my dearer lord?

36 those eyes = Romeo's eyes

37 (1) short, (2) hasty, quick*

38 either

39 happiness, success

40 God save the mark! = God help/preserve us!

41 corpse

42 spattered

43 thick, congealing blood (adjective)

44 fainted (swooned)

45 (which can also mean “to ruin financially, to bankrupt”)

46 her body

47 to earth resign = to the grave surrender

48 movement (life)

49 weigh down

50 the stand on which coffins are set

Then, dreadful⁵¹ trumpet, sound the general doom,⁵²

For who is living, if those two are gone?

Nurse Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banishèd.

Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd.

70

Juliet O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

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

Juliet O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.

Did ever dragon keep⁵³ so fair a cave?

Beautiful tyrant,⁵⁴ fiend angelical,

75

Dove feathered raven, wolvisch ravening lamb!

Despisèd substance of divinest show!⁵⁵

Just opposite⁵⁶ to what thou justly⁵⁷ seem'st:

A damnèd saint, an honorable villain!

O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell

80

When thou didst bower⁵⁸ 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,

85

No faith, no honesty in men, all perjured,

All forsworn,⁵⁹ all naught, all dissemblers.

51 awe-inspiring

52 general doom = Last Judgment

53 (1) live in, (2) guard

54 desperado, ruffian, villain (in its modern sense)

55 outside appearance

56 just opposite = substance exactly opposite

57 with good reason

58 shelter, enclose

59 liars, breakers of their oaths

But O it presses to⁶⁷ my memory 110
 Like damnèd guilty deeds to sinners' minds.
 "Tybalt is dead, and Romeo – banishèd."
 That "banishèd," that one word, "banishèd,"
 Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death
 Was woe enough, if it had ended there, 115
 Or if sour woe delights in fellowship⁶⁸
 And needly⁶⁹ will be ranked⁷⁰ 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?⁷¹ 120
 But with a rearward⁷² following Tybalt's death,
 "Romeo is banishèd" – to speak that word
 Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
 All slain, all dead. "Romeo is banishèd":
 There is no end, no limit, measure,⁷³ bound,⁷⁴ 125
 In that word's death, no words can that woe sound.⁷⁵
 Where is my father and my mother, Nurse?
Nurse Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse.
 Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.
Juliet Wash they his wounds with tears? Mine shall be spent, 130
 When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.

67 presses to = forces itself on, attacks/assails/harasses

68 company

69 necessity

70 wishes to be joined/positioned with

71 modern lamentation might have moved = might have provoked/caused ordinary lamentation

72 later/subsequent addition (literally: "rearguard")

73 quantity

74 boundary

75 reach to the bottom of

Take up those cords. Poor ropes, you are beguiled,
Both you and I, for Romeo is exiled.⁷⁶

He made you for a highway to my bed,

135 But I, a maid, die maiden widowèd.

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 wot⁷⁷ well where he is.

140 Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night.

I'll to him. He is hid at Laurence cell.

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

EXEUNT

76 (exILED)

77 know

SCENE 3
Friar Laurence's cell

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE

Friar Romeo, come forth, come forth, thou fearful¹ man.
 Affliction is enamored of thy parts,²
 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 5
 That I yet know not?

Friar Too familiar
 Is my dear son with such sour company.
 I bring thee tidings of the Prince's doom.

Romeo What less than doomsday is the Prince's doom?

Friar A gentler judgment vanished³ from his lips: 10
 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 Hence from Verona art thou banishèd. 15
 Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

Romeo There is no world without⁴ Verona walls,
 But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
 Hence banishèd is banished from the world,

1 frightened, terrorized

2 personal qualities/attributes*

3 fell (and then disappeared, as spoken words necessarily do)

4 outside

20 And world's exile⁵ is death. Then "banishment"
 Is death mis-termed. Calling death "banishment"⁶
 Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe
 And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

Friar O deadly sin, O rude unthankfulness.

25 Thy fault our law calls death, but the kind Prince,
 Taking thy part, hath rushed⁷ aside the law
 And turned that black word death to banishment.
 This is dear mercy, and thou see'st it not.

Romeo 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here

30 Where Juliet lives, and every cat and dog
 And little mouse, every unworthy⁸ thing,
 Live here in heaven and may look on her,
 But Romeo may not. More validity,⁹
 More honorable¹⁰ state,¹¹ more courtship¹² lives
 35 In carrion flies than Romeo. They¹³ 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,
 40 But Romeo may not, he is banishèd.

5 (ex)ILE)

6 is DEATH misTERMED. CALLing death BANishMENT

7 forced, driven

8 worthless, undeserving

9 (1) force, strength, effectiveness, (2) value, worth

10 (HONorABLE)

11 manner of existence

12 courtliness

13 there are those who ("they" seems not to refer back, as modern pronouns tend to do, but forward, to "who blush . . . thinking . . .": can we suspect "flies" of existing in "pure and vestal modesty"?)

Flies¹⁴ may do this, but I from this must fly.
 They are¹⁵ free men, but I am banishèd.
 And sayest thou yet that exile is not death?
 Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp ground knife,
 No sudden mean¹⁶ of death, though ne'er so mean,¹⁷ 45
 But “banishèd” to kill me¹⁸ – “banishèd”?
 O friar, the damnèd use¹⁹ that word in hell:
 Howling attends²⁰ it. How hast thou the heart,
 Being a divine,²¹ a ghostly confessor,²²
 A sin absolver, and my friend professed,²³ 50
 To mangle me with that word “banishèd”?
Friar Thou fond²⁴ mad man, hear me a little speak.
Romeo O thou wilt speak again of banishment.
Friar I'll give thee armor to keep off that word,
 Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy, 55
 To comfort thee, though thou art banishèd.
Romeo Yet “banishèd”? Hang up philosophy.²⁵
 Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
 Displant²⁶ a town, reverse a prince's doom,

14 not only men, but even flies

15 are like?

16 means

17 poor, inferior, debased

18 (the syntax is “hadst thou no poison [etc.] . . . to kill me”)

19 damnèd use: noun + verb

20 follows, accompanies (in hell)

21 clergyman, priest

22 (CONFesSOR)

23 declared, self-acknowledged, ostensible

24 foolish, silly

25 hang up philosophy = philosophy be hanged

26 substitute for

- 60 It helps not, it prevails²⁷ not. Talk no more.
Friar O then I see that madmen have no ears.
Romeo How should they, when that²⁸ wise men have no eyes?
Friar Let me dispute²⁹ with thee of thy estate.³⁰
Romeo Thou canst not speak of that³¹ thou dost not feel.
- 65 Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
 An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,
 Doting like me, and like me banishèd,
 Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,
 And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
- 70 Taking the measure³² of an unmade³³ grave. (*falls at full length*)

KNOCK

- Friar* Arise, one knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.
Romeo Not I, unless the breath of heartsick groans
 Mist-like³⁴ enfold me from the search³⁵ of eyes.

KNOCK

- Friar* Hark, how they knock! Who's there? Romeo, arise,
 75 Thou wilt be taken. – (*to the person knocking*) Stay awhile! –
 (*to Romeo*) Stand up,

27 succeeds, avails

28 when that = when

29 debate, discuss, argue

30 condition, fortune

31 what

32 taking the measure = measuring

33 not yet made

34 mist-like = like mist

35 scrutiny, examination

KNOCK

run to my study. — (*to the person knocking*) By and by! — (*to Romeo*) God's will,
 What simpleness³⁶ is this. — (*to the person knocking*) I come,
 I come.

KNOCK

Who knocks so hard? Whence come you? What's your will?
Nurse (*within*) Let me come in, and you shall know my errand.
 I come from Lady Juliet.

Friar Welcome then.

80

ENTER NURSE

Nurse O holy friar, O tell me, holy friar,
 Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo?

Friar There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

Nurse O he is even in my mistress' case,
 Just in her case. O woeful sympathy,
 Piteous predicament.³⁷ Even so lies she,
 Blubb'ring and weeping, weeping and blubbering.
 Stand up, stand up! Stand, an you be a man.
 For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand!
 Why should you fall into so deep an O?³⁸

85

90

Romeo (*rising*) Nurse —

Nurse Ah sir, ah sir, death's the end of all.

Romeo Spak'st thou of Juliet? How is it with her?

36 foolishness

37 state, situation (usually dangerous)

38 so deep an O = so deep a state of lamentation/groaning

95 Doth not she think me an old³⁹ murderer,
 Now⁴⁰ I have stained the childhood of our joy
 With blood removed⁴¹ but little from her own?
 Where is she? And how doth she? And what says⁴²
 My concealed⁴³ lady to our canceled love?

Nurse O she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,
 100 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,⁴⁴
 Shot from the deadly level⁴⁵ of a gun,
 Did murder her, as⁴⁶ that name's cursèd hand
 105 Murdered her kinsman. O tell me, friar, tell me,
 In what vile part of this anatomy
 Doth my name lodge?⁴⁷ Tell me, that I may sack⁴⁸
 The hateful mansion.⁴⁹

HE DRAWS HIS DAGGER

Friar Hold thy desp'rate hand.
 Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art,

39 practiced, experienced

40 now that

41 distant in relationship

42 where IS she AND how DOTH she AND what SAYS

43 secret (CONcealed)

44 that name: Romeo

45 aiming

46 just as

47 reside, dwell

48 plunder, despoil

49 (his own body)

Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote⁵⁰ 110
 The unreasonable⁵¹ fury of a beast.
 Unseemly⁵² woman in a seeming⁵³ man,
 Or ill beseeeming beast in seeming both!
 Thou hast amazed me. By my holy order,⁵⁴
 I thought thy disposition⁵⁵ better tempered.⁵⁶ 115
 Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself
 And slay thy lady, that⁵⁷ in thy life lives,
 By doing damnèd hate upon thyself?
 Why rail'st⁵⁸ thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth,
 Since birth and heaven and earth all three do meet 120
 In thee at once, which thou at once wouldst lose.⁵⁹
 Fie, fie, thou sham'st thy shape,⁶⁰ thy love, thy wit,
 Which, like a usurer,⁶¹ abound'st in all,⁶²
 And usest⁶³ none in that true use⁶⁴ indeed
 Which should bedeck⁶⁵ thy shape, thy love, thy wit. 125

50 indicate

51 irrational

52 unbecoming, indecent

53 a seeming = an apparent

54 by my holy order: an exclamation/oath

55 nature, temperament, inclination

56 better tempered = more elastic, balanced

57 who

58 speak abusively about

59 which thou at once wouldst lose = if you killed/want to kill yourself

60 human and manly

61 a grasping man who lends money at high rates of interest

62 abound'st in all = fairly teems in you (and in all men?)

63 you use (like a usurer, who illicitly – by church doctrine – charges interest
for the “use” of his money)

64 true use: holy use, as opposed to a usurer's illicit use

65 adorn

Thy noble shape is but a form of wax⁶⁶
 Digressing⁶⁷ from the valor of a man;
 Thy dear love sworn⁶⁸ but hollow perjury,⁶⁹
 Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish;
 130 Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
 Misshapen⁷⁰ in the conduct of them both,
 Like powder⁷¹ in a skillless soldier's flask,⁷²
 Is set afire by thine own ignorance
 And thou dismembered⁷³ with thine own defense.⁷⁴
 135 What, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive,
 For whose dear sake thou wast but lately⁷⁵ dead.
 There⁷⁶ art thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,
 But thou slew'st Tybalt. There art thou happy too.
 The law, that threatened death, becomes thy friend
 140 And turns it to exile. There art thou happy.
 A pack⁷⁷ of blessings light upon thy back;
 Happiness courts thee in her best array;⁷⁸
 But like a misbehaved and sullen wench
 Thou pouts upon thy fortune and thy love.

66 a form of wax = a waxen shape

67 swerving, diverging

68 (adjective modifying "love")

69 hollow perjury = empty falsehood

70 distorted, deformed

71 like powder = as gunpowder

72 gunpowder case, made of horn, leather, or metal

73 ripped apart

74 that which should defend you, in Romeo's case "reason," "intellect"

75 not long since

76 in that/her

77 bundle

78 attire, dress

Take heed, take heed, for such⁷⁹ die miserable. 145

Go get thee to thy love, as was decreed,⁸⁰

Ascend her chamber – hence, and comfort her.

But look⁸¹ thou stay⁸² not till the watch⁸³ be set,⁸⁴

For then thou canst not pass⁸⁵ to Mantua,

Where thou shalt live till we can find a time 150

To blaze⁸⁶ your marriage, reconcile your friends,

Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back

With twenty hundred thousand times more joy

Than thou wentst forth in lamentation.⁸⁷

Go before, Nurse. Commend me to thy lady, 155

And bid her hasten all the house to bed,

Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto.

Romeo is coming.

Nurse O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night

To hear good counsel. O what learning is. 160

(*to Romeo*) My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

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

NURSE STARTS TO LEAVE, THEN TURNS BACK

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

Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

EXIT NURSE

79 such people

80 resolved, decided, arranged

81 be careful, make sure

82 linger

83 sentinels, guards (“police”)*

84 set in place (for the night), posted

85 get through

86 proclaim and publicize

87 LAMenTAtiON

165 *Romeo* How well my comfort⁸⁸ is revived by this.

Friar Go hence, good night – and here stands all your state:

Either be gone before the watch be set,

Or by the break of day, disguised, from hence.

Sojourn in Mantua. I'll find out your man,⁸⁹

170 And he shall signify⁹⁰ from time to time

Every good hap⁹¹ to you that chances here.

Give me thy hand. 'Tis late. Farewell, good night.

Romeo But that a joy past joy calls out on me,

It were a grief so brief to part⁹² with thee.

175 Farewell.

EXEUNT

88 enjoyment, pleasure

89 servant

90 make known

91 good chance/fortune

92 so brief to part = to leave even for such a brief period

SCENE 4
Capulet's house

ENTER OLD CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, AND PARIS

Capulet Things have fallen out¹, sir, so unluckily
 That we have had no time to move² our daughter.
 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. 5
 I promise you, but for your company,
 I would have been abed an hour ago.

Paris These times of woe afford no times to woo.
 Madam, good night. Commend me to your daughter.

Lady Capulet I will, and know³ her mind early tomorrow. 10
 Tonight she's mew'd up to⁴ her heaviness.

Capulet Sir Paris, I will make a desp'rate⁵ tender⁶
 Of my child's love. I think she will be ruled⁷
 In all respects by me. Nay more, I doubt it not.
 Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed. 15
 Acquaint her here of my son⁸ Paris' love
 And bid her (mark you me?) on Wednesday next –
 But, soft. What day is this?

1 fallen out = chanced to happen

2 persuade, solicit, propose

3 I will know

4 mew'd up to = shut in with her

5 somewhat reckless and unsure

6 offer

7 controlled, guided

8 son-in-law to be, which then meant "son" and was often used in advance of actual marriage

Paris Monday, my lord.

20 *Capulet* Monday! Ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon.

Thursday let it be, a⁹ Thursday, tell her

She shall be married to this noble earl.¹⁰

(*to Paris*) Will you be ready?¹¹ Do you like this haste?

We'll keep¹² no great ado,¹³ a friend or two,

25 For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,¹⁴

It may be thought we held him¹⁵ carelessly,

Being our kinsman, if we revel much.

Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,

And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

30 *Paris* My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

Capulet Well, get you gone. A Thursday be it then.

(*to Lady Capulet*) Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed.

Prepare her, wife, against¹⁶ this wedding day.

(*to Paris*) Farewell, my lord. – (*to Servant*) Light to¹⁷ my
chamber, ho!

35 Afore me.¹⁸ It is so very late that we

May call it early by and by. Good night.

EXEUNT

9 on

10 (that is, "count")

11 willing

12 observe

13 fuss

14 recently, lately

15 held him = esteemed/regarded him

16 with regard to*

17 light to = bring light for my going to

18 (1) (if spoken to a servant): go/walk in front/in advance of me, (2) (if spoken to Paris) O my ("in my very sight/in the presence of God")

SCENE 5

Capulet's orchard

ENTER ROMEO AND JULIET ALOFT, AT THE WINDOW

- Juliet* Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.
 It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
 That pierced the fearful¹ hollow of thine ear.
 Nightly she sings on yond pom'granate tree.²
 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 lace³ the severing⁴ clouds in yonder east.
 Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund⁵ day
 Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. 10
 I must be gone and live, or stay and die.
- Juliet* Yond light is not daylight,⁶ I know it, I.
 It is some meteor⁷ that the sun exhales
 To be to thee this night a torchbearer⁸
 And light thee on the way to Mantua. 15
 Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.
- Romeo* Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death.
 I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
 I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,

1 apprehensive, full of fear

2 (NIGHTLY she SINGS on YOND pomGRANate TREE)

3 embroider, thread

4 separating, parting

5 mirthful, light-hearted

6 (dayLIGHT)

7 flaring light thought to be gaseous vapors from the sun (MEETyor)

8 TORCHbearer

20 'Tis but the pale reflex⁹ of Cynthia's brow.¹⁰
 Nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat
 The vaulty¹¹ heaven so high above our heads.
 I have more care¹² to stay than will to go.
 Come, death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so.
 25 How is't, my soul?¹³ Let's talk, it is not day.

Juliet It is, it is. Hie hence, be gone, away.
 It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
 Straining¹⁴ harsh discords¹⁵ and displeasing sharps.¹⁶
 Some say the lark makes sweet division.¹⁷
 30 This¹⁸ doth not so, for she divideth us.
 Some say the lark and loathèd toad change¹⁹ eyes.
 O now I would they had changed voices too,
 Since arm from arm²⁰ that voice doth us affray,²¹
 Hunting thee hence with "Hunt's up"²² to the day.
 35 O now be gone, more light and light it grows.

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

ENTER NURSE

- 9 reflection
- 10 Cynthia's brow = the moon's forehead
- 11 arched like a vault
- 12 concern, solicitude, desire
- 13 my soul = Juliet
- 14 constricting its throat to produce, forcing
- 15 dissonances
- 16 shrill, high-pitched notes
- 17 melody, song (diViSiON)
- 18 this particular lark
- 19 exchanged (toads having large and lovely eyes, larks small and uninteresting eyes)
- 20 arm from arm = each other's arms
- 21 disturb, frighten
- 22 (song calling sleepers to wake and join the hunt)

Nurse Madam.

Juliet Nurse?

Nurse Your lady mother is coming to your chamber.

The day is broke, be wary, look about.

40

EXIT

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

Romeo Farewell, farewell. One kiss, and I'll descend.²³

HE GOES DOWN

Juliet Art thou gone so, love²⁴ lord, ay husband friend?²⁵

I must hear from thee every day in the hour,

For in a minute there are many days.

45

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.

50

Juliet O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

Romeo I doubt it not, and all these woes shall serve

For sweet discourses²⁶ in our time to come.

Juliet O God, I have an ill-divining²⁷ soul!

Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,

55

As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

23 (using his rope ladder)

24 (some texts follow "love" with a comma)

25 love lord = compound noun; husband friend = compound noun, though friend = lover (texts vary a great deal)

26 conversations

27 ill-divining = foreseeing evil (compound adjective)

Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

Romeo And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.

Dry²⁸ sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu.

EXIT

60 *Juliet* O Fortune, Fortune! All men call thee fickle.

If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him

That is renowned for faith? Be fickle,²⁹ Fortune,³⁰

For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long

But send him back.

Lady Capulet (*within*) Ho, daughter. Are you up?

65 *Juliet* Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.

Is she not down³¹ so late, or up so early?

What unaccustomed cause procures³² her hither?

ENTER LADY CAPULET

Lady Capulet Why, how now, Juliet?

Juliet Madam, I am not well.

Lady Capulet Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?

70 What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?

An if thou couldst,³³ thou couldst not make him live.

Therefore have done. Some³⁴ grief shows much of love,³⁵

But much of grief shows still some want³⁶ of wit.

28 thirsty

29 fickle with him

30 Fortuna, a goddess

31 gone to bed

32 induces, brings, urges

33 wash him from his grave

34 a certain amount of

35 much of love = much love

36 (noun)

- Juliet* Yet let me weep for such a feeling³⁷ loss.
- Lady Capulet* So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend³⁸ 75
Which you weep for.
- Juliet* Feeling so the loss,
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.³⁹
- 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. 80
- Juliet* (*aside*) Villain and he be many miles asunder.⁴⁰
(*to Lady Capulet*) God pardon him: I do, with all my heart,
And yet no man like⁴¹ he doth grieve my heart.
- Lady Capulet* That is because the traitor murderer lives.
- Juliet* Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands. 85
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 one⁴² in Mantua,
Where that same banished runagate⁴³ doth live,
Shall give him such an unaccustomed dram⁴⁴ 90
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company;
And then I hope thou wilt be satisfied.
- Juliet* Indeed I never shall be satisfied⁴⁵
With Romeo till I behold him – dead –

37 emotional, heartfelt (adjective)

38 "friend" also means "lover" (though Lady Capulet does not so intend it)

39 friend = lover (and Juliet does so intend it)

40 separated, apart

41 in the same way, as much as

42 someone, some person

43 runaway, fugitive

44 unaccustomed dram = strange potion/drink*

45 sexually satisfied (which Lady Capulet did not mean to say)

95 Is my poor heart⁴⁶ so⁴⁷ for a kinsman vexed.⁴⁸
 Madam, if you could find out but a man
 To bear a poison, I would temper⁴⁹ it,
 That⁵⁰ Romeo should, upon receipt⁵¹ thereof,
 Soon sleep⁵² in quiet.⁵³ O how my heart abhors
 100 To hear him named and cannot⁵⁴ come to him,⁵⁵
 To wreak⁵⁶ the love I bore my cousin Tybalt
 Upon his body⁵⁷ that⁵⁸ 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.

105 *Juliet* And joy comes well in such a needy time.
 What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

46 Lady Capulet hears "till I behold [Romeo] dead." But Juliet, who is deceiving her mother all through the scene, means "till I behold [Romeo], dead is my poor heart . . ." Pausing before and after "dead" is the key.

47 thus, in that way

48 a kinsman vexed = a relative (as Romeo is to her, by marriage, though Lady Capulet does not know Juliet is married) troubled/harassed/grieved (as Romeo certainly is and as Tybalt can no longer be, since he is past all feeling)

49 (1) mix, add to (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) make it suitable/proper, reduce/modify/moderate (which Juliet in fact means)

50 so that

51 (1) ingesting (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) receiving (which Juliet means)

52 (1) die (as Lady Capulet understands), (2) sleep (as Juliet means)

53 in quiet = (1) lifeless (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) peacefully (as Juliet means)

54 and cannot = when I cannot

55 come to him = (1) get at him (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) be with him (as Juliet means)

56 (1) force (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) press (which Juliet means)

57 upon his body (1) against his body (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) with his body – that is, sexually (as Juliet means)

58 he who

- Lady Capulet* Well, well, thou hast a careful⁵⁹ father, child,
 One who, to put thee from⁶⁰ thy heaviness,
 Hath sorted out⁶¹ a sudden⁶² day of joy
 That thou expects not nor I looked not for. 110
- Juliet* Madam, in happy time.⁶³ What day is that?
- Lady Capulet* Marry,⁶⁴ 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. 115
- Juliet* Now by Saint Peter's Church, and Peter⁶⁵ too,
 He shall not make me there a joyful bride.
 I wonder at⁶⁶ this haste, that I must wed
 Ere he⁶⁷ that should⁶⁸ be husband⁶⁹ comes to woo.
 I pray you tell my lord and father, madam, 120
 I will not marry yet, and when I do, I swear⁷⁰
 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. 125

59 considerate, solicitous

60 put thee from = remove/divert you from*

61 sorted out = ordained, ordered, arranged

62 (1) unexpected, (2) speedy

63 in happy time = excellent! very good!

64 (an exclamation, not a verb: originally an ejaculatory evocation of the Virgin Mary, but by Shakespeare's time virtually devoid of its original significance)

65 by Saint Peter

66 wonder at = am surprised by

67 the man

68 ought to, must

69 my husband

70 (a hexameter line)

ENTER CAPULET AND NURSE

Capulet When the sun sets the air doth drizzle dew,⁷¹

But for the sunset⁷² of my brother's son

It rains downright.⁷³

How now? A conduit,⁷⁴ girl? What, still in tears?

130 Evermore showering? In one little body

Thou counterfeit'st⁷⁵ a bark,⁷⁶ a sea, a wind:

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,⁷⁷

135 Who raging⁷⁸ with thy tears, and they with them,⁷⁹

Without⁸⁰ a sudden calm will upset⁸¹

Thy tempest-tossed⁸² body. How now, wife?

Have you delivered⁸³ to her our decree?⁸⁴

Lady Capulet Ay, sir, but she will none,⁸⁵ she gives you thanks.

140 I would the fool were married to her grave.

Capulet Soft. Take me with you,⁸⁶ take me with you, wife.

71 doth drizzle dew: as if weeping for the departure of the sun

72 death

73 coming down perpendicularly, out and out

74 fountain, water pipe

75 imitate, simulate

76 small-sized sailing vessel

77 the winds, thy sighs = the winds are (in Capulet's metaphor) your sighs

78 which, if they (the winds) behave wildly/violently

79 and they with them = and vice versa

80 unless there is

81 overthrow, overcome, capsize

82 hurled, disordered

83 (1) given, (2) spoken

84 decision

85 will none = wants no part of it ("wishes not at all")

86 take me with you = let me understand you

How? Will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?
 Is she not proud?⁸⁷ Doth she not count her⁸⁸ blest,
 Unworthy⁸⁹ as she is, that we have wrought⁹⁰
 So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom? 145

Juliet Not proud⁹¹ you have, but thankful⁹² that you have.
 Proud⁹³ can I never be of what I hate,⁹⁴
 But thankful even for hate⁹⁵ that is meant⁹⁶ love.

Capulet How, how, how, how, chop logic?⁹⁷ What is this?
 “Proud,” and “I thank you,” and “I thank you not,” 150
 And yet “not proud”? Mistress minion⁹⁸ you,
 Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,
 But fettle⁹⁹ your fine joints¹⁰⁰ ’gainst¹⁰¹ Thursday next
 To go with Paris to Saint Peter’s Church,
 Or I will drag thee on a hurdle¹⁰² thither. 155
 Out, you green sickness¹⁰³ carrion!¹⁰⁴ Out, you baggage!¹⁰⁵

87 honored, gratified, pleased

88 herself

89 undeserving

90 produced

91 pleased

92 grateful

93 pleased

94 of what I hate = by what I am averse to

95 aversion

96 meant to be

97 hair splitter, sophist (some texts have “chopped logic”)

98 hussy, over-dainty

99 prepare, make ready

100 fine joints = perfect/elegant/delicate body (“bones”)★

101 toward, in preparation for (“against”)

102 wooden sledge (on which criminals were conveyed to their place of execution)

103 green sickness = adolescent, immature (compound adjective)

104 carcass (nothing more than worthless flesh)

105 (1) rubbish, trash, dirt, (2) slut, whore

You tallow¹⁰⁶ face!

Lady Capulet (to Capulet) Fie, fie. What, are you mad?

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

SHE KNEELS

160 *Capulet* Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!

I tell thee what. Get thee to church a¹⁰⁷ Thursday

Or never after look me in the face.

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me.

My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce¹⁰⁸ thought us blest

165 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.¹⁰⁹

Nurse God in heaven bless her.

You are to blame,¹¹⁰ my lord, to rate¹¹¹ her so.

170 *Capulet* And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,

Good Prudence. Smatter¹¹² with your gossips, go.

Nurse I speak no treason.

Capulet O God i' god en!¹¹³

Nurse May not one speak?

106 wax (adjective)

107 on

108 barely, hardly (“scarcely”)

109 wretch, jade, baggage

110 wrong (“to be blamed”)

111 scold/reprove angrily

112 chatter, prate

113 God 'i god en = for God's sake (“may God give her a good evening” – that is, get rid of her)

- Capulet* Peace, you mumbling fool!
 Utter your gravity¹¹⁴ o'er a gossip's bowl,¹¹⁵
 For here we need it not.
- Lady Capulet* You are too hot. 175
- Capulet* God's bread,¹¹⁶ it makes me mad. Day, night, late,
 early,
 At home, abroad, alone, in company,
 Waking or sleeping, still my care¹¹⁷ hath been
 To have her matched.¹¹⁸ And having now provided
 A gentleman of princely parentage, 180
 Of fair demesnes,¹¹⁹ youthful, and nobly trained,¹²⁰
 Stuffed, as they say, with honorable parts,
 Proportioned¹²¹ as one's thought would wish a man –
 And then to have a wretched puling¹²² fool,
 A whining mammet,¹²³ in her fortune's tender,¹²⁴ 185
 To answer "I'll not wed, I cannot love,
 I am too young, I pray you pardon me!"
 But, an you will not wed, I'll pardon you.
 Graze¹²⁵ where you will, you shall not house¹²⁶ with me.

114 grave/serious/weighty remarks

115 drinking vessel

116 God's bread = consecrated wafer (an oath)

117 attention, concern

118 married

119 possessions, estates (dehMEENZ)

120 educated

121 composed (physically)

122 whining, wailing

123 doll, puppet

124 in her fortune's tender = when good fortune is offered to her

125 feed, pasture

126 dwell (verb)

190 Look to't, think on't, I do not use¹²⁷ jest.
 Thursday is near, lay hand on heart,¹²⁸ advise.¹²⁹
 An you be mine,¹³⁰ I'll give you to my friend—
 An you be not, hang!¹³¹ Beg! Starve! Die in the streets!
 For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge¹³² thee,
 195 Nor what¹³³ is mine shall never do thee good.
 Trust to't. Bethink you. I'll not be forsworn.¹³⁴

EXIT

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.
 200 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

205 *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

127 do not use to = am not in the habit of

128 lay hand on heart = think seriously/carefully/deeply

129 consider (verb)

130 an you be mine = if you are truly/really my daughter

131 go to the devil ("go and be hanged – so you can go where you belong, to hell")

132 show any recognition/acknowledgment of

133 what property/funds

134 be forsworn = obliged to break my word

Unless that husband send it me¹³⁵ from heaven
 By leaving earth?¹³⁶ Comfort me, counsel me.
 Alack, alack, that heaven should practice stratagems¹³⁷ 210
 Upon so soft¹³⁸ a subject¹³⁹ as myself.
 What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?
 Some comfort, Nurse.

Nurse Faith, here it is.
 Romeo is banished, and all the world to nothing¹⁴⁰
 That he dares ne'er come back to challenge¹⁴¹ you, 215
 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 dishclout¹⁴² to him. An eagle, madam, 220
 Hath not so green,¹⁴³ 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 225
 As living here and you no use of¹⁴⁴ him.

Juliet Speak'st thou this from thy heart?

Nurse And from my soul too, else beshrew them both.

135 to me

136 leaving earth = dying

137 practice stratagems = play tricks, work schemes

138 quiet, mild, docile

139 person

140 all the world to nothing = the chances are a million to one

141 find fault with, accuse

142 dish cloth

143 (hazel-green eyes were considered handsome)

144 use of = profit from (especially sexual profit)

Juliet Amen.

230 *Nurse* What?

Juliet Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much.

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

235 *Nurse* Marry, I will, and this is wisely done.

EXIT

Juliet Ancient damnation!¹⁴⁵ O most wicked fiend,

Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,¹⁴⁶

Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue

Which she hath praised him with¹⁴⁷ above compare¹⁴⁸

240 So many thousand times? Go, counselor.

Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.¹⁴⁹

I'll¹⁵⁰ to the friar to know his remedy.¹⁵¹

If all else fail, myself have power to die.

EXIT

145 ancient damnation! = damned old devil!

146 perjured

147 which she hath praised him with = with which she has praised him

148 above compare = beyond comparison

149 parted, separated, estranged

150 I'll go

151 help, relief*

Act 4



SCENE I

Friar Laurence's cell

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND COUNTY PARIS

Friar On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

Paris My father Capulet will have it so,
And I am nothing slow¹ to slack² his haste.

Friar You say you do not know the lady's mind.
Uneven³ is the course.⁴ I like it not.

Paris Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
And therefore have I little talked of love,
For Venus smiles not in a house⁵ of tears.
Now sir, her father counts it dangerous⁶

5

1 I am nothing slow = I myself am not at all/in no way inclined

2 to slack = making less active/vigorous

3 irregular

4 path

5 (not a human place of dwelling but an astrological position)

6 hurtful, injurious

10 That she do give her sorrow so much sway,⁷
 And in his wisdom hastes⁸ our marriage⁹
 To stop the inundation¹⁰ of her tears,
 Which, too much minded¹¹ by herself alone,¹²
 May be put from her by society.¹³

15 Now do you know the reason of this haste.

Friar (aside) I would I knew not why it should¹⁴ be slowed. —
 Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.

ENTER JULIET

Paris Happily met, my lady and my wife.

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

20 *Paris* That may be, must be, love, on Thursday next.

Juliet What must be shall be.

Friar That's a certain¹⁵ text.

Paris Come you to make confession to this father?

Juliet To answer that, I should confess to you.

Paris Do not deny to him that you love me.

25 *Juliet* I will confess to you that I love him.

Paris So will ye,¹⁶ I am sure, that you love me.

Juliet If I do so, it will be of more price,¹⁷

7 influence, power of command

8 (verb)

9 (MARIAGE)

10 overflowing, flooding, superfluous abundance

11 thought of, focused on

12 when alone

13 companionship

14 ought

15 fixed, settled

16 so will ye = so too will you confess to him

17 value, worth

Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

Paris Poor soul, thy face is much abused¹⁸ with tears.

Juliet The tears have got small victory by that, 30

For it was bad enough before their spite.¹⁹

Paris Thou wrong'st it more than tears with that report.²⁰

Juliet That is no slander, sir, which is a truth,

And what I spake, I spake it to my face.²¹

Paris Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it. 35

Juliet It may be so, for it is not mine own.²²

Are you at leisure, holy father, now,

Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

Friar My leisure serves me,²³ pensive²⁴ daughter, now.

(to *Paris*) My lord, we must entreat²⁵ the time alone. 40

Paris God shield²⁶ I should disturb²⁷ devotion.

Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye.

Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss.

EXIT

Juliet O, shut the door, and when thou hast done so

Come weep with me – past hope, past cure, past help! 45

Friar Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief.

18 misused, worn out

19 injury, harm

20 statement

21 (pun on saying thing's to a person's face and, here, literally saying it to a face – her face)

22 (that is, it belongs to the man who is already her husband, Romeo)

23 serves me = is my servant/helper (“obeys me”)

24 (1) thoughtful, serious, (2) anxious, apprehensive

25 ask for

26 prevent

27 trouble, interfere with

It strains²⁸ me past the compass²⁹ of my wits.

I hear thou must – and nothing may prorogue³⁰ it –

On Thursday next be married to this County.

50 *Juliet* Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st 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 resolution³¹ wise

And with this knife I'll help³² it presently.³³

55 God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou³⁴ our hands,

And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo's sealed,³⁵

Shall be the label³⁶ to another deed,³⁷

Or my true heart with treacherous revolt³⁸

Turn to another, this shall slay them both.³⁹

60 Therefore, out of thy long experienced time,⁴⁰

Give me some present⁴¹ counsel, or behold,

'Twixt my extremes⁴² and me this bloody knife

Shall play the umpire, arbitrating⁴³ that

28 distresses, afflicts, presses hard upon

29 limits, bounds

30 delay, postpone

31 solution, answer

32 do what is needed, bring it to pass

33 speedily, without delay, right now*

34 you joined

35 fastened, tied

36 ribbon to which a documentary seal is attached

37 (1) action, (2) written document of a legal nature

38 rebellion

39 hand and heart

40 years, life

41 quick, immediate, instant*

42 'twixt my extremes = between my utterly opposed/harsh/severe/
intolerable circumstances

43 deciding, determining

Which⁴⁴ the commission⁴⁵ of thy years and art
 Could to no issue⁴⁶ of true honor bring. 65

Be not so long to speak. I long to die
 If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

Friar Hold, daughter. I do spy a kind of hope,
 Which craves as desperate an execution⁴⁷
 As that is desperate which we would prevent. 70

If, rather than to marry County Paris
 Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,
 Then is it likely thou wilt undertake
 A thing like death to chide⁴⁸ away this shame,
 That cop'st⁴⁹ with death himself to scape from it. 75
 And if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

Juliet O bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
 From off the battlements⁵⁰ of yonder tower,
 Or walk in thievish ways,⁵¹ or bid me lurk⁵²
 Where serpents are. Chain me with roaring bears, 80
 Or shut me nightly in a charnel house,⁵³
 O'ercovered quite⁵⁴ with dead men's rattling bones,

44 that which = what

45 authority

46 end, termination, way out, exit

47 carrying into effect, fulfillment (which CRAVES as DESprit an EXeCUtiON)

48 drive

49 (1) barter, bargain, (2) encounter, face

50 tops of the walls

51 thievish ways = (1) dishonest paths, (2) paths/roads where thieves congregate

52 live, hide

53 charnel house = funeral parlor

54 completely

With reeky shanks⁵⁵ and yellow chapless⁵⁶ skulls,
 Or bid me go into a new-made grave
 85 And hide me with a dead man in his shroud –
 Things that, to hear⁵⁷ them told, have made me tremble –
 And I will do it without fear or doubt,
 To live an unstained⁵⁸ wife to my sweet love.

Friar Hold,⁵⁹ then. Go home, be merry, give consent
 90 To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow.
 Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone.
 Let not the Nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.
 Take thou this vial,⁶⁰ being then⁶¹ in bed,
 And this distilling⁶² liquor drink thou off,
 95 When presently through all thy veins shall run
 A cold and drowsy humor,⁶³ for no pulse
 Shall keep his native progress,⁶⁴ but surcease,⁶⁵
 No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest,
 The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
 100 To wanny ashes,⁶⁶ thy eyes' windows⁶⁷ fall

55 reeky shanks = blackened leg bones

56 jawless

57 to hear = even/just to hear

58 spotless, pure, unblemished, untarnished

59 continue, stay as you are, carry on

60 small glass bottle

61 being then = when you are

62 concentrated, purified

63 state of being (“humors” concerned both matters physiological *and* psychological)

64 native progress = natural march/onward movement

65 stop

66 wanny ashes = pale as ashes (some texts have “wany,” or “paly,” or “many,” or “mealy”)

67 eyes' windows = eyelids

Like death when he shuts up⁶⁸ the day⁶⁹ of life.
 Each part, deprived of supple government,⁷⁰
 Shall stiff and stark⁷¹ and cold appear, like death,
 And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk⁷² death
 Thou shalt continue two and forty hours 105
 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, 110
 Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault⁷³
 Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
 In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,
 Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift,
 And hither shall he come, and he and I 115
 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 toy⁷⁴ nor womanish fear
 Abate⁷⁵ thy valor in the acting it. 120
Juliet Give me,⁷⁶ give me! O tell not me of fear.

68 shuts up = closes

69 light ("daylight")

70 supple government = control/management of the flexibility of body and limbs

71 hard, rigid

72 contracted, shrunken

73 burial chamber

74 inconstant toy = fickle/changeable whim/foolish fancy

75 (1) destroy, demolish, (2) beat back, diminish, reduce

76 give me = give it to me

Friar Hold. Get you gone, be strong and prosperous⁷⁷

In this resolve.⁷⁸ I'll send a friar with speed

To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

125 *Juliet* Love give me strength, and strength shall help afford.⁷⁹

Farewell, dear father.

EXEUNT

77 successful

78 (1) decision, solution, (2) firmness of purpose

79 help afford = afford (give, furnish) help

SCENE 2

Capulet's house

ENTER CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, NURSE,
AND TWO OR THREE SERVINGMEN

Capulet (to *Servingman*) So many guests invite as here are writ.

EXIT SERVINGMAN

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning¹ cooks.

Servingman 2 You shall have none ill,² sir, for I'll try³ if they can lick their fingers. 5

Capulet How canst thou try them so?

Servingman 2 Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own fingers.⁴ Therefore he that cannot lick his fingers goes not⁵ with me.

Capulet Go, begone.⁶ 10

EXIT SERVINGMAN 2

We shall be much unfurnished⁷ for this time.

What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

Nurse Ay, forsooth.

Capulet Well, he may chance to do some good on⁸ her.

1 skillful, expert

2 of inferior quality

3 test

4 (because a bad cook knows the food does not taste good)

5 goes not = (1) does not travel/join, (2) won't be successful

6 leave

7 unprepared

8 to

15 A peevish⁹ self-willed harlotry¹⁰ it is.

ENTER JULIET

Nurse See where she comes from shrift with merry look.

Capulet How now, my headstrong?¹¹ Where have you been gadding?¹²

Juliet Where I have learnt me to repent the sin
Of disobedient opposition¹³

20 To you and your behests,¹⁴ and am enjoined¹⁵

By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here

To beg your pardon. (*she kneels*) Pardon, I beseech you.

Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

Capulet Send for the County. Go tell him of this.

25 I'll have this knot¹⁶ knit up tomorrow morning.

Juliet I met the youthful lord at Laurence cell
And gave him what becoming love¹⁷ I might,
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

Capulet Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.

30 This is as't should be. Let me see the County.

Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.

Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,

All our whole city is much bound¹⁸ to him.

9 silly, foolish

10 obscene behavior/talk

11 willful/stubborn one

12 wandering

13 (of DISobEEDyent OPoSitiON)

14 commands

15 directed, instructed

16 union, tie ("marriage")

17 becoming love = suitable/proper reverence/affection

18 obliged, grateful

Juliet Nurse, will you go with me into my closet
 To help me sort¹⁹ such needful ornaments²⁰ 35
 As you think fit to furnish me²¹ tomorrow?
Lady Capulet No, not till Thursday. There is time enough.
Capulet Go, Nurse, go with her. We'll to church tomorrow.

EXEUNT JULIET AND NURSE

Lady Capulet We shall be short in our provision.²²
 'Tis now near night.
Capulet Tush, I will stir about,²³ 40
 And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.
 Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up²⁴ her.
 I'll not to bed tonight, let me alone.
 I'll play the housewife for this once. (*calls for servants*) What,
 ho!
 (*to Lady Capulet*) They are all forth.²⁵ Well, I will walk myself 45
 To County Paris, to prepare him up
 Against²⁶ tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light,
 Since this same wayward²⁷ girl is so reclaimed.²⁸

EXEUNT

19 choose, decide on

20 attire, trappings (clothing of a decorative nature)

21 furnish me = provide for myself

22 household arrangements/supplies

23 stir about = busy myself

24 deck up = clothe/adorn/outfit

25 out, away

26 prepare him up against = ready him for

27 disobedient, wrongheaded, self-willed, stubborn

28 brought/called back, reformed

SCENE 3

Juliet's chamber

ENTER JULIET AND NURSE

Juliet Ay, those attires¹ are best. But, gentle Nurse,
 I pray thee leave me to myself tonight,
 For I have need of many orisons²
 To move the heavens to smile upon my state,³
 5 Which, well thou knowest, is cross⁴ and full of sin.

ENTER LADY CAPULET

Lady Capulet What, are you busy, ho? Need you my help?

Juliet No, madam. We have culled⁵ such necessities
 As are behoveful⁶ for our state tomorrow.
 So please you, let me now be left alone,
 10 And let the Nurse this night sit up with you,
 For I am sure you have your hands full all⁷
 In this so sudden business.

Lady Capulet Good night.
 Get thee to bed, and rest, for thou hast need.

EXEUNT MOTHER AND NURSE

Juliet Farewell. God knows when we shall meet again.

1 dresses

2 prayers

3 condition (state of mind)

4 unfavorable

5 chosen, gathered, picked*

6 useful, proper

7 (1) all = completely, (2) all of you ("you all have your hands full")

I have a faint⁸ cold fear thrills⁹ through my veins 15
 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 scene¹⁰ I needs must act alone.
 Come, vial. 20
 What if this mixture do not work at all?
 Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?
 No, no! This shall forbid¹¹ it. (*speaks to her dagger*) Lie thou
 there.

LAYS DAGGER DOWN

What if it be a poison which the friar
 Subtly¹² hath ministered¹³ to have me dead, 25
 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,¹⁴
 For he hath still been tried¹⁵ a holy man.
 I will not entertain¹⁶ so bad a thought. 30
 How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
 I wake before the time that Romeo
 Come to redeem¹⁷ me? There's a fearful point.

8 (1) sickly, (2) cowardly

9 trickling

10 dismal scene = sinister/terrible/miserable activity/episode

11 stop it, make it impossible

12 (1) cleverly, artfully, (2) treacherously

13 furnished, supplied

14 should not = should not be

15 still been tried = always been proven

16 admit, consider

17 free, recover

Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
 35 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 like¹⁸
 The horrible conceit of death and night,
 Together with the terror of the place,
 40 As in¹⁹ a vault, an ancient receptacle²⁰
 Where for this many hundred years the bones
 Of all my buried ancestors are packed²¹ –
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,²²
 Lies fest'ring²³ in his shroud – where, as they say,
 45 At some hours in the night spirits resort.²⁴
 Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
 So early waking, what with loathsome smells,
 And shrieks like mandrakes²⁵ torn out of the earth,
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad –
 50 O if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
 Environèd with²⁶ all these hideous fears,
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints,²⁷
 And pluck²⁸ the mangled²⁹ Tybalt from his shroud,

18 likely, probable

19 as in = since I will be in

20 repository

21 pressed together in a mass, stuffed, crammed

22 green in earth = newly buried

23 rotting

24 come

25 mandragora: a split-rooted, humanlike plant that was thought, when pulled up, to give a maddening shriek

26 environèd with = beset by

27 (MY foreFATHER's JOINTS)

28 pull, remove, drag

29 mutilated

And, in this rage,³⁰ with some great kinsman's bone
 As with a club dash out my desp'rate brains? 55
 O look, methinks I see my cousin's ghost
 Seeking out Romeo, that³¹ did spit³² his body
 Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!
 Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, here's drink! I drink to thee.³³

SHE DRINKS AND FALLS UPON HER BED

30 madness, fit

31 who

32 thrust through, pierce (to out on a spit)

33 (ROmeo ROmeo ROmeo here's DRINK i DRINK to THEE)

SCENE 4
Capulet's house

ENTER LADY CAPULET AND NURSE

Lady Capulet Hold,¹ take these keys and fetch more spices,
Nurse.

Nurse They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.²

ENTER CAPULET

Capulet Come, stir, stir, stir!³ The second cock hath
crowed,
The curfew bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.
5 Look to the baked meats,⁴ good Angelica.⁵
Spare not⁶ for cost.

Nurse Go, you cot queen,⁷ go,
Get you to bed. Faith, you'll be sick tomorrow
For⁸ this night's watching.

Capulet No, not a whit.⁹ What, I have watched ere now
10 All night for lesser cause,¹⁰ and ne'er been sick.

Lady Capulet Ay, you have been a mouse hunt¹¹ in your time,

1 here

2 in the pastry kitchen (possibly, but less likely, in the pastries themselves)

3 move, keep busy

4 baked meats = meat pies ("pastries")

5 the Nurse's name

6 spare not = don't hold back

7 cot queen = a man meddling in women's business

8 on account/because of

9 least little bit

10 motive, reason, purpose

11 mouse hunt = night prowler (like a cat, a hunter of mice; a woman, in slang, was a "mouse")

But I will watch you from¹² such watching now.

EXEUNT LADY CAPULET AND NURSE

Capulet A jealous hood,¹³ a jealous hood!

ENTER THREE OR FOUR SERVINGMEN, WITH SPITS,¹⁴
LOGS, AND BASKETS

Now, fellow, what is there?

Servingman 1 Things for the cook, sir, but I know not what. 15

Capulet Make haste, make haste.

EXIT SERVINGMAN 1

(to *Servingman 2*) Sirrah,

fetch drier logs.

Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

Servingman 2 I have a head, sir, that will find out logs

And never trouble Peter for¹⁵ the matter.

Capulet Mass,¹⁶ and well said. A merry whoreson,¹⁷ ha. 20

Thou shalt be loggerhead.¹⁸

EXIT SERVINGMAN 2

Good faith, 'tis day.

The County will be here with music,¹⁹ straight,

12 watch you from = be alert/on guard to keep you from

13 (exact meaning uncertain, but the general sense seems clear: "you're jealous of my former exploits!")

14 sharp rods, metal or wood, to be pierced through meat for roasting over a fire
15 about

16 by the Mass (exclamation)

17 slangy praise ("a merry s.o.b.")

18 blockhead: a bad pun on "using his head" and being the "head" of the hunt for "logs"

19 musicians

For so he said he would.

MUSIC

I hear him near.

Nurse! Wife! What, ho! What, Nurse, I say!²⁰

ENTER NURSE

- 25 Go waken Juliet, go and trim²¹ her up.
I'll go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,
Make haste! The bridegroom he is come already:
Make haste, I say.

EXEUNT

20 (NURSE WIFE what HO what NURSE i SAY)

21 (1) dress, (2) support, comfort, (3) strengthen, (4) get ready

SCENE 5
Juliet's chamber

ENTER NURSE

Nurse Mistress! What, mistress! Juliet! Fast,¹ I warrant her, she.
 Why, lamb, why, lady! Fie, you slug-abed!
 Why, love, I say! Madam! Sweetheart! Why, bride!
 What, not a word? You take your pennyworths² now.
 Sleep for a week – for³ the next night, I warrant, 5
 The County Paris hath set up his rest⁴
 That you shall rest but little. God forgive me!⁵
 Marry, and amen. How sound is she asleep!
 I needs must wake her. Madam, madam, madam!
 Ay, let the County take you⁶ in your bed, 10
 He'll fright you up, i' faith. Will it not be?⁷

SHE DRAWS BED CURTAINS ASIDE

What, dressed, and in your clothes, and down⁸ again?
 I must needs wake you. Lady! Lady! Lady!
 Alas, alas! Help, help! My lady's dead!
 O weraday that ever I was born! 15

1 fast asleep

2 small bits of sleep

3 because

4 set up his rest = resolved/determined (based on usages from card playing)

5 (for her bawdiness)

6 take you = catch/find (with the added meaning of "take" as sexual possession)

7 will it not be? = (1) isn't that the way it will be? or (2) won't you ever wake up?

8 lying down

Some *aqua vitae*, ho! My lord! My lady!

ENTER LADY CAPULET

Lady Capulet What noise⁹ is here?

Nurse O lamentable¹⁰ day!

Lady Capulet What is the matter?

Nurse Look, look! O heavy¹¹ day!

Lady Capulet O me, O me! My child, my only life!

20 *Revive,*¹² *look up,*¹³ *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.¹⁴ She's dead! Alack the day!

Lady Capulet Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

25 *Capulet* Ha! let me see her. Out alas.¹⁵ She's cold,

Her blood is settled¹⁶ 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!

30 *Lady Capulet* O woeful time!

Capulet Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,

9 shouting, loud cries

10 (L)Amen(T)Able

11 grievous, distressful

12 (1) return to consciousness, (2) return to life

13 look up = open your eyes

14 (not then an uncommon word in ordinary vocabularies, "deceased" carried the sense of "recently" dead)

15 out alas = exclamation of lamentation

16 stagnant, coagulated, not flowing

Ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND THE COUNTY PARIS,
WITH MUSICIANS

- Friar* Come, is the bride ready to go to church?
- Capulet* Ready to go, but never to return.
(to Paris) O son, the night before thy wedding day 35
Hath Death¹⁷ lain with thy wife. See, there she lies,
Flower as she was, deflowered¹⁸ 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. 40
- Paris* Have I thought long to see¹⁹ this morning's
face,²⁰
And doth it give me²¹ such a sight as this?
- Lady Capulet* Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw
In lasting labor²² of his pilgrimage!²³ 45
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel Death hath caught²⁴ it from my sight!
- Nurse* O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!
Most lamentable day, most woeful day 50

17 Death: masculine, in English (though feminine in most European languages)

18 her virginity taken

19 thought long = yearned, waited wearily/ impatiently

20 morning's face = dawn

21 give me = bestow on me, put before me

22 lasting labor = enduring/permanent/long-continuing work/task/exertion

23 long journey

24 driven, chased

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.

55 *Paris* Beguiled,²⁵ divorcèd,²⁶ wrongèd, spited,²⁷ slain.²⁸

Most detestable²⁹ Death, by thee beguiled,

By cruel,³⁰ cruel thee quite overthrown.³¹

O love! O life not life, but love in death!

Capulet Despised,³² distressèd,³³ hated, martyred, killed.

60 Uncomfortable³⁴ time, why cam'st thou now

To murder,³⁵ murder our solemnity?³⁶

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.

65 *Friar* Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure³⁷ lives not

In these confusions.³⁸ Heaven and yourself

Had part³⁹ in this fair maid. Now heaven hath all,

And all the better is it for the maid.

25 deceived, cheated

26 a marriage cut/broken off

27 treated maliciously

28 slaughtered

29 (DEETesTABLE)

30 (bisyllabic)

31 vanquished

32 unvalued, treated with contempt/scorn

33 afflicted, exhausted, crushed

34 unconsoling, empty of comfort (unCOMforTABLE)

35 kill with premeditated/deliberate malice

36 specially important/observed ritual occasion

37 confusion's cure = the remedy for destruction/ruin

38 agitated/fluttering disorderly displays

39 a share (parents create the body; God creates – and then takes back – the soul)

Your part in her you could not keep from death,
 But heaven keeps his part in eternal life. 70
 The most you sought was her promotion,⁴⁰
 For 'twas your heaven⁴¹ she should be advanced –
 And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced
 Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
 O in this⁴² love, you love your child so ill⁴³ 75
 That you run mad, seeing that she is well.⁴⁴
 She's not well married that lives married long,
 But she's best married that dies married young.⁴⁵
 Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary⁴⁶
 On this fair corse, and, as the custom is, 80
 In all her best array bear her to church.
 For though fond⁴⁷ nature bids us all lament,
 Yet nature's tears are reason's⁴⁸ merriment.
Capulet All things that we ordainèd⁴⁹ festival
 Turn from their office⁵⁰ to black funeral, 85
 Our instruments⁵¹ to melancholy bells,⁵²

40 elevation/advance/progression to a higher rank (from “maid” to “wife”)
 (proMOtiON)

41 (their heaven, but not God's, the only true heaven)

42 this kind of

43 wrongfully, sinfully, wickedly

44 fortunate, happy (with a pun on “well” as “not sick in body”)

45 (again, Juliet is considered already married to Paris: the wedding solemnizes
 the prior fact)

46 evergreen leaves, signifying remembrance (ROSEmaRY)

47 insipidly/foolishly tender/loving

48 reason = the ordered/logical/reasonable/believable teaching of religion

49 prepared, arranged, made ready

50 duty, employment, obligation*

51 (of celebratory music making)

52 (funeral church bells)

Our wedding cheer⁵³ to a sad burial feast,
 Our solemn hymns⁵⁴ to sullen⁵⁵ dirges⁵⁶ change,
 Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,
 90 And all things change them⁵⁷ to the contrary.
Friar Sir, go you in, and madam, go with him,
 And go, Sir Paris. Everyone prepare
 To follow this fair corse unto her grave.
 The heavens do low'r⁵⁸ upon you for some ill:⁵⁹
 95 Move them no more by crossing⁶⁰ their high will.

EXEUNT ALL BUT MUSICIANS AND NURSE

Musician 1 Faith, we may put up our pipes and be gone.
Nurse Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up!
 For well you know this is a pitiful case.⁶¹

EXIT NURSE

Musician 1 Ay, by my troth, the case⁶² may be amended.⁶³

ENTER PETER

100 *Peter* Musicians, O, musicians, "Heart's ease,"⁶⁴ "Heart's

53 mirth, joy

54 (in praise)

55 gloomy, dismal, melancholy

56 (prayers/rituals in memoriam)

57 themselves

58 frown, scowl (spelled "lour" or "lower")

59 morally wrong action/conduct

60 thwarting, opposing

61 situation

62 the case in which his musical instrument is carried

63 improved, repaired

64 popular song, the words to which are lost; an earlier poem, "Death the Port of Peace," supplies the customary message: "Here is the rest of all your

ease"! O an you will have me live, play "Heart's ease."

Musician 1 Why "Heart's ease"?

Peter O, musicians, because my heart itself plays "My heart is full of woe." O, play me some merry dump⁶⁵ to comfort me. 105

Musician 1 Not a dump we! 'Tis no time to play now.

Peter You will not then?

Musician 1 No.

Peter I will then give it you soundly.⁶⁶

Musician 1 What will you give us? 110

Peter No money, on my faith, but the gleeck.⁶⁷ I will give you the minstrel.⁶⁸

Musician 1 Then will I give you the serving creature.

Peter Then will I lay⁶⁹ the serving creature's dagger on your pate.⁷⁰ I will carry no crotchets.⁷¹ I'll *re*⁷² you, I'll *fa* you. Do you note⁷³ me? 115

Musician 1 An you *re* us and *fa* us, you note us.⁷⁴

Musician 2 Pray you put up your dagger, and put out⁷⁵ your wit.

busyness, / Here is the port of peace and restfulness" (normalized from *Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Carleton Brown [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939], 259)

65 tune, melody

66 thoroughly, properly, to the full (with a pun on "soundly" as by means of "sounds")

67 jest, mockery

68 buffoon, clown

69 bring/beat down, deposit, apply

70 head

71 carry no crotchets = endure no (1) perverse/cranky whims, (2) musical notes (as one "carries" a tune)

72 (*do, re, me, fa, so* = Italian words for the notes of the musical scale)

73 (1) mark, pay attention to, (2) set musical notes to words, (3) play music

74 note us = (1) put musical notes on us, (2) pay close attention to us

75 put/give forth, utter, show

Peter Then have at you with my wit. I will dry beat you
 120 with an iron wit, and put up⁷⁶ my iron dagger. Answer me
 like men:

“When griping⁷⁷ grief the heart doth wound,
 And doleful dumps⁷⁸ the mind oppress,
 Then music with her silver sound” – ⁷⁹

125 Why “silver sound”? Why “music with her silver sound”?
 What say you, Simon Catling?⁸⁰

Musician 1 Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Peter Pretty.⁸¹ What say you, Hugh Rebeck?⁸²

Musician 2 I say “silver sound” because musicians sound⁸³ for
 130 silver.

Peter Pretty too. What say you, James Soundpost?⁸⁴

Musician 3 Faith, I know not what to say.

Peter O I cry you mercy.⁸⁵ You are the singer.⁸⁶ I will say⁸⁷
 for you. It is “music with her silver sound” because musicians
 135 have no gold for sounding:⁸⁸

76 put up = sheathe

77 painful, distressing

78 low/heavy spirits, fits of melancholy / depression

79 Richard Edwards (1523?–1566), “A Song to the Lute in Musicke,” in Percy,
Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, 1:187–89

80 catling = cat gut for the strings of musical instruments

81 clever, ingenious

82 early form of the fiddle

83 make sounds, play music

84 wooden peg beneath the bridge of violins, etc., connecting the instrument’s
 back and belly

85 I cry you mercy = I beg your pardon (here ironic)

86 (all you can do is sing / play music)

87 speak (which you as a “singer” plainly cannot be expected to do)

88 jingling in their purses

“Then music with her silver sound
With speedy help doth lend redress.”

EXIT PETER

Musician 1 What a pestilent⁸⁹ knave is this same.⁹⁰

Musician 2 Hang him, Jack. Come, we'll in here, tarry⁹¹ for the
mourners, and stay⁹² dinner.

140

EXEUNT

89 annoying, troublesome

90 same/identical man

91 delay, linger, wait for

92 stay to

Act 5



SCENE I

Mantua. A street

ENTER ROMEO

Romeo If I may trust the flattering¹ truth of sleep
My dreams presage² some joyful news at hand.³
My bosom's lord⁴ sits lightly⁵ in his throne,⁶
And all this day an unaccustomed⁷ spirit
5 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead –
Strange dream that gives a dead man leave⁸ to think! –
And breathed⁹ such life with kisses in my lips

1 promising, pleasing

2 predict/foreshadow (by supernatural means)

3 at hand = near, close by

4 bosom's lord = love

5 easily, cheerfully

6 his heart

7 unaccustomed spirit = unusual/strange/unfamiliar emotion/feeling

8 permission

9 breathed into me

That I revived and was an emperor.

Ah me, how sweet is love itself¹⁰ possessed, 10
When but love's shadows¹¹ are so rich in joy.

ENTER BALTHASAR, ROMEO'S MAN, WEARING RIDING BOOTS

News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?¹²
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How fares my Juliet?¹³ That I ask again, 15
For nothing can be ill if she be well.

Balthasar Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.

Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,¹⁴
And her immortal part with angels lives.¹⁵
I saw her laid low¹⁶ in her kindred's vault 20
And presently took post¹⁷ to tell it you.
O pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

Romeo Is it e'en¹⁸ so? Then I defy¹⁹ you, stars!²⁰

(*to Balthasar*) Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and
paper 25

10 in and of itself

11 paler/fainter images/traces

12 (BALthaSAR)

13 (JULyet)

14 sepulcher, tomb

15 (verb)

16 under the ground

17 took post = hurried, by means of hiring horses to be available at stages in his journey

18 really, truly, indeed

19 repudiate, challenge*

20 astrologically determined fate

And hire posthorses.²¹ I will hence²² tonight.

Balthasar I do beseech you, sir, have patience.²³

Your looks are pale and wild and do import²⁴

Some misadventure.²⁵

Romeo Tush, thou art deceived.

30 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

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.

35 Let's see for means. O mischief,²⁶ thou art swift

To enter in the thoughts of desperate men.

I do remember an apothecary,²⁷

And hereabouts 'a dwells, which²⁸ late I noted

In tattered weeds,²⁹ with overwhelming³⁰ brows,

40 Culling of simples.³¹ Meager³² were his looks,

21 (see note 17, just above)

22 leave

23 have patience = be calm/move slowly

24 indicate, predict

25 bad luck/fortune

26 evil, misfortune, calamity

27 dealer in/maker of drugs

28 who

29 clothes

30 overhanging, jutting (because lack of food has caused his eyes to seem sunken?)

31 simples = herbs/leaves/roots

32 lean, emaciated

Sharp³³ misery had worn him to the bones,
 And in his needy³⁴ shop a tortoise hung,
 An alligator stuffed, and other skins
 Of ill-shaped fishes, and about his shelves
 A beggarly account³⁵ of empty boxes, 45
 Green earthen³⁶ pots, bladders,³⁷ and musty³⁸ seeds,
 Remnants of packthread,³⁹ and old cakes of roses⁴⁰
 Were thinly⁴¹ scattered to make up a show.⁴²
 Noting this penury,⁴³ to myself I said,
 “An if a man did need a poison now, 50
 Whose sale is present death in Mantua,
 Here lives a caitiff⁴⁴ wretch would sell it him.”⁴⁵
 O this same thought did but forerun⁴⁶ my need,
 And this same needy man must⁴⁷ sell it me.
 As I remember, this should be the house. 55
 Being holiday, the beggar’s shop is shut.
 What, ho! Apothecary!

33 keen, piercing, severe

34 poor

35 beggarly account = poverty-stricken number/sum/amount

36 clay

37 taken from dead animals and used, much like plastic bags, as containers
(especially of liquids)

38 moldy

39 twine, cord

40 cakes of roses = compacted rose petals, used for their scent

41 sparsely

42 make up a show = produce/represent/constitute the appearance of a
mercantile display

43 extreme poverty

44 miserable, piteous (from “captive”)

45 to him

46 anticipate

47 (1) could, (2) should (is likely to), (3) needs/is obliged to

ENTER APOTHECARY

Apothecary Who calls so loud?

Romeo Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.

Hold, there is forty ducats.⁴⁸ Let me have

60 A dram of poison, such⁴⁹ soon-speeding gear⁵⁰

As will disperse⁵¹ itself through all the veins

That the life-weary⁵² taker may fall dead,

And that⁵³ the trunk⁵⁴ may be discharged⁵⁵ of breath

As violently as hasty⁵⁶ powder fired

65 Doth hurry from the fatal⁵⁷ cannon's womb.

Apothecary Such mortal⁵⁸ drugs I have, but Mantua's law

Is death to any he⁵⁹ that utters⁶⁰ them.

Romeo Art thou so bare⁶¹ and full of wretchedness

And fearest to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,

70 Need and oppression⁶² starveth⁶³ in thine eyes,

Contempt⁶⁴ and beggary hangs upon thy back.

48 gold coins

49 such a

50 soon speeding gear = quick-moving (1) stuff, (2) corrupt/foul matter

51 distribute, circulate, spread

52 life-weary = (compound adjective)

53 and that = so that

54 body

55 freed, emptied, relieved

56 rapid, speedy

57 fateful, ruinous, deadly

58 deadly, destructive

59 person

60 sells

61 deprived, poverty-stricken, destitute

62 misfortune, distress

63 suffer most intensely, wither

64 dishonor, disgrace

The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law.
 The world affords⁶⁵ no law to make thee rich.
 Then be not poor, but break it⁶⁶ and take this.

Apothecary My poverty but not my will consents. 75

Romeo I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

Apothecary Put this in any liquid thing you will⁶⁷
 And drink it off,⁶⁸ and if you had the strength
 Of twenty men, it would dispatch⁶⁹ you straight.

Romeo There is thy gold – worse poison to men's souls, 80
 Doing more murder in this loathsome world,
 Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.
 I sell⁷⁰ thee poison; thou hast sold me none.
 Farewell. Buy food and get thyself in flesh.
 (*to the poison*) Come, cordial⁷¹ and not poison, go with me 85
 To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

EXEUNT

65 gives, supplies, grants

66 the law

67 wish to

68 drink it off = drink all of it

69 kill

70 give/hand/deliver to

71 restorative

SCENE 2

Verona. Friar Laurence's cell

ENTER FRIAR JOHN

John Holy Franciscan friar, brother, ho!

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE

Friar (entering) This same should be the voice of Friar John.*(seeing Friar John)* Welcome from Mantua. What says Romeo?Or, if his mind¹ be writ, give me his letter.5 *John* Going² to find a barefoot brother out,³One of our order, to associate me,⁴

Here in this city visiting the sick,

And finding him, the searchers of the town,⁵Suspecting that we both were in a house⁶10 Where the infectious pestilence⁷ did reign,⁸Sealed up the doors, and would not let us forth,⁹So that my speed¹⁰ to Mantua there was stayed.¹¹*Friar* Who bore my letter, then, to Romeo?*John* I could not send it – here it is again –

15 Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,

1 thought, intention

2 after going

3 find a barefoot brother out = search for a barefoot brother

4 associate me = join with me (friars not being allowed to travel alone)

5 searchers of the town = public officials who located plague sites

6 religious house (monastery or convent)

7 plague

8 did reign = flourished, was prevalent

9 go away, come out

10 swift progress

11 halted

So fearful were they of infection.

Friar Unhappy fortune!¹² By my brotherhood,
 The letter was not nice,¹³ but full of charge,¹⁴
 Of dear import,¹⁵ and the neglecting it¹⁶
 May do much danger.¹⁷ *Friar John*, go hence, 20
 Get me an iron crow¹⁸ and bring it straight
 Unto my cell.

John Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

EXIT

Friar Now must I to the monument alone.
 Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake.
 She will beshrew me much that Romeo 25
 Hath had no notice of these accidents,¹⁹
 But I will write again to Mantua,
 And keep her at my cell till Romeo come –
 Poor living corse, closed²⁰ in a dead man's tomb!

EXIT

12 unhappy fortune! = wretched/miserable/unlucky chance/accident

13 foolish, trivial

14 weight, importance

15 dear import = grievous significance

16 neglecting it = failure to do it

17 harm, damage

18 crowbar

19 occurrences, events (especially of an unfortunate nature)

20 shut, confined

SCENE 3

Verona. A churchyard. The monument of the Capulets

ENTER PARIS AND HIS PAGE WITH FLOWERS AND A TORCH

Paris Give me thy torch, boy. Hence,¹ and stand aloof.²

Yet put it³ out, for I would not⁴ be seen.

Under yond yew tree⁵ lay thee all along,⁶

Holding thine ear close to the hollow⁷ ground,

5 So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,

Being⁸ loose, unfirm, with⁹ digging up of graves,

But thou shalt hear it. Whistle then to me,

As signal that thou hear'st something approach.

Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

10 *Page* (*aside*) I am almost afraid to stand alone

Here in the churchyard, yet I will adventure.

HE RETIRES

Paris Sweet flower,¹⁰ with flowers thy bridal bed I strew –

O woe, thy canopy¹¹ is dust and stones –

Which with sweet¹² water nightly I will dew,¹³

1 go off/away

2 (1) at some distance, (2) apart from whatever happens

3 the burning torch

4 would not = do not wish

5 yew tree: associated with sadness, perhaps for its very dark green foliage;
often planted in churchyards

6 all along = lengthwise, at full length

7 excavated (dug up for graves)

8 the churchyard being

9 from, because of

10 Juliet

11 covering over a ceremonial procession

12 fragrant, scented

13 (verb)

Or wanting¹⁴ that, with tears distilled¹⁵ by moans. 15
 The obsequies¹⁶ that I for thee will keep
 Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

PAGE WHISTLES

The boy gives warning something doth approach.
 What cursèd foot wanders this way tonight
 To cross¹⁷ my obsequies and true love's rite? 20
 What, with a torch? Muffle¹⁸ me, night, awhile.

RETIRES

ENTER ROMEO AND BALTHASAR WITH A TORCH,
 A MATTOCK,¹⁹ AND AN IRON CROWBAR

Romeo Give me that mattock and the wrenching²⁰ iron.
 Hold, 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, 25
 Whate'er thou hearest or seest, stand all aloof
 And do not interrupt me in my course.
 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 30
 A precious ring, a ring that I must use
 In dear employment.²¹ Therefore hence, be gone.

14 failing, lacking

15 purified, concentrated

16 funeral rites/ceremonies

17 oppose, thwart

18 conceal, envelop

19 tool for digging in hard ground (similar to a pick-axe)

20 used for twisting: the crowbar

21 dear employment = important/honorable matters/business

- But if thou, jealous,²² dost²³ return to pry²⁴
 In what I farther²⁵ shall intend to do,
 35 By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint
 And strew this hungry²⁶ churchyard with thy limbs.
 The time and my intents are savage wild,²⁷
 More fierce and more inexorable²⁸ far
 Than empty²⁹ tigers or the roaring sea.
- 40 *Balthasar* I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.
Romeo So³⁰ shalt thou show me friendship.³¹ (*gives him
 money*) Take thou that.
 Live, and be prosperous, and farewell, good fellow.
Balthasar (*aside*) For all this same,³² I'll hide me hereabout.
 His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.³³

RETIRES

- 45 *Romeo* Thou detestable³⁴ maw,³⁵ thou womb³⁶ of death,
 Gorged³⁷ with the dearest³⁸ morsel³⁹ of the earth,

22 mistrustful, doubtful, suspicious

23 do

24 spy, peer, observe more closely

25 in addition

26 hungry: a burial place is "hungry" for corpses

27 savage wild = horribly fierce

28 relentless (inEXorABLE)

29 unfed, hungry

30 thus

31 a friendly act/favor/assistance

32 for all this same = despite what he says/has given me

33 mistrust, suspect

34 (DEEtesTABLE)

35 throat, stomach

36 belly-like cavity

37 stuffed, glutted

38 most glorious/beloved/precious

39 a choice dish/snack/small meal

Thus I enforce⁴⁰ thy rotten jaws to open,
 And in despite⁴¹ I'll cram⁴² thee with more food.⁴³

ROMEO OPENS THE TOMB

Paris This is that banished haughty Montague
 That murdered my love's cousin – with which grief 50
 It is supposed the fair creature died –
 And here is come to do some villainous shame⁴⁴
 To the dead bodies. I will apprehend⁴⁵ him.
 (*to Romeo*) Stop thy unhallowed toil,⁴⁶ vile Montague.
 Can vengeance be pursu'd further than death? 55
 Condemnèd villain, I do apprehend thee.
 Obey, and go with me, for thou must die.

Romeo I must indeed, and therefore came I hither.
 Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man.
 Fly hence and leave me. Think upon these gone,⁴⁷ 60
 Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,
 Put not another sin upon my head
 By urging⁴⁸ me to fury. O be gone.
 By heaven, I love thee better than myself,
 For I come hither armed against myself. 65
 Stay not, be gone. Live, and hereafter say

40 force, compel

41 contempt, scorn, defiance

42 stuff (verb)

43 more food = an additional meal (himself)

44 villainous shame = wicked/depraved/vile indecency, disgraceful/offensive deed

45 seize, arrest

46 unhallowed toil = profane/wicked/impious labor

47 these gone = the corpses in the tomb (now displayed)

48 pressing, pushing, spurring

A madman's mercy bid thee run away.

Paris I do defy thy conjuration⁴⁹

And apprehend thee for a felon⁵⁰ here.

70 *Romeo* Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

THEY FIGHT

Page O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.

EXIT PAGE

PARIS FALLS

Paris O I am slain! If thou be merciful,

Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.

HE DIES

Romeo In faith, I will. Let me peruse⁵¹ this face.

75 *Mercutio's* kinsman, noble County Paris!

What said my man⁵² when my betossed⁵³ soul

Did not attend him as we rode? I think

He told me Paris should have⁵⁴ married Juliet.

Said he not so? Or did I dream it so?

80 Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet

To think it was so? (*to Paris*) O give me thy hand,

One writ with⁵⁵ me in sour misfortune's book.

49 (1) appeal, solemn charge, (2) trick (CONjurAtiON)

50 (1) wretch, villain, (2) convicted criminal

51 inspect, examine

52 what said my man = what did my servant say

53 agitated, disturbed

54 should have = was supposed to have

55 writ with = recorded/inscribed ("written") along with

I'll bury thee in a triumphant⁵⁶ grave.
 A grave? O no, a lantern,⁵⁷ slaughtered youth,
 For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
 This vault a feasting presence⁵⁸ full of light.
 Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interred.⁵⁹

85

LAYS PARIS IN THE TOMB

(*to and of himself*) How oft when men are at the point of
 death

Have they been merry! Which their keepers⁶⁰ call
 A light'ning⁶¹ before⁶² death. O how may I
 Call this a light'ning? (*to Juliet*) O my love, my wife,
 Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.
 Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign⁶³ yet
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
 And death's pale flag is not advanced⁶⁴ there.
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?⁶⁵
 O what more favor can I do to thee
 Than with that hand⁶⁶ that cut thy youth in twain⁶⁷

90

95

56 victor's, conqueror's

57 (1) transparent case, enclosing and illuminated by a light, (2) top of a lighthouse, (3) structure with glazed light-admitting apertures/windows

58 feasting presence = banqueting/celebratory place

59 deposited, buried

60 custodians, guards

61 revival ("lightening")

62 BEEfore

63 sign, flag, emblem

64 raised, lifted

65 burial shroud ("winding sheet")

66 his own hand

67 two

100 To sunder⁶⁸ his that was thine enemy?
 Forgive me, cousin.⁶⁹ Ah, dear Juliet,
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
 That unsubstantial⁷⁰ Death is amorous,
 And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps
 105 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?⁷¹
 For fear of that I still will stay with thee
 And never from this palace⁷² of dim night
 Depart again. Here, here will I remain
 With worms⁷³ that are thy chambermaids. O here
 110 Will I set up my everlasting rest
 And shake⁷⁴ the yoke of inauspicious stars⁷⁵
 From this world-wearied flesh.⁷⁶ (*to himself*) Eyes, look your
 last.
 Arms, take your last embrace! (*embracing Juliet*) And lips,
 O you
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
 115 A dateless bargain to engrossing Death.⁷⁷ (*kisses Juliet*)
 (*to the poison*) Come, bitter conduct,⁷⁸ come, unsavory⁷⁹
 guide,

68 put an end to, cut off

69 Tybalt (cousin by marriage)

70 without body/material substance

71 lady love, mistress

72 (1) storehouse, (2) palatial/stately mansion

73 with worms = together with the worms/maggots

74 flee, be free of

75 yoke of inauspicious stars = fetters/chains of ill omened/malign
 astrological influences

76 this world-wearied flesh = this flesh (himself) tired of the living world

77 dateless bargain to engrossing Death = eternal sale (of himself) to all-
 purchasing/greedy

78 bitter conduct = painful/grievous/afflicting escort

79 disagreeable, unpleasant, distasteful, offensive

Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
 The dashing⁸⁰ rocks thy seasick weary bark.⁸¹
 Here's to my love! (*drinks*) O true apothecary!
 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

120

HE FALLS

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE, WITH LANTERN,
 CROWBAR, AND SPADE

Friar Saint Francis be my speed.⁸² How oft tonight
 Have my old feet stumbled at⁸³ graves. Who's there?

Balthasar Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

Friar Bliss⁸⁴ be upon you. Tell me, good my friend,
 What torch is yond⁸⁵ that vainly⁸⁶ lends his light
 To grubs⁸⁷ and eyeless skulls? As I discern,⁸⁸
 It burneth in the Capels' monument.

125

Balthasar It doth so, holy sir, and there's my master,⁸⁹
 One that you love.

Friar Who is it?

Balthasar Romeo.

Friar How long hath he been there?

Balthasar Full half an hour.

130

Friar Go with me to the vault.

Balthasar I dare not, sir.

80 violently splashed

81 (himself: like a ship, he is bearing/carrying the poison)

82 help, assistance (see *1 Henry IV* 3.1.189, "Good manners be your speed!")

83 on

84 felicity, joy

85 that one over there ("yonder")

86 pointlessly, uselessly

87 maggots

88 as I discern = as well as I can see/tell

89 there's my master = in there is my master

My master knows not but⁹⁰ I am gone hence,
 And fearfully⁹¹ did menace me with death
 If I did stay to look on his intents.⁹²

135 *Friar* Stay, then, I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me.

O much I fear some ill unthrifty⁹³ thing.

Balthasar As I did sleep under this yew tree here,

I dreamt my master and another fought,

And that my master slew him.

Friar Romeo!⁹⁴

140 Alack, alack, what⁹⁵ blood is this which stains

The stony⁹⁶ entrance of this sepulcher?

What mean⁹⁷ these masterless⁹⁸ and gory swords

To lie discolored by this place of peace?⁹⁹

ENTERS THE TOMB

Romeo! O pale! Who else? What, Paris too?

145 And steeped¹⁰⁰ in blood? Ah, what an unkind¹⁰¹ hour

Is guilty of this lamentable chance?¹⁰²

The lady stirs.

JULIET RISES

90 knows not but = thinks/believes that

91 dreadfully, terribly

92 plans, projects, purposes

93 harmful, wasteful

94 exclamation of surprise/shock (hearing what Romeo has done)

95 whose

96 stone

97 what mean = what does it mean that

98 without a master/owner

99 eternal peace, not worldly

100 soaked

101 unnatural

102 accident, mishap

- Juliet* O comfortable¹⁰³ friar, where is my lord?
 I do remember well where I should¹⁰⁴ be,
 And there I am. Where is my Romeo? 150
- Friar* I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest
 Of death, contagion,¹⁰⁵ and unnatural sleep.
 A greater power than we can contradict
 Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.
 Thy husband in thy bosom¹⁰⁶ there lies dead, 155
 And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of¹⁰⁷ 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.
- Juliet* Go, get thee hence, for I will not away. 160

EXIT FRIAR

- What's here? A cup, closed in my true love's hand?
 Poison, I see, hath been his timeless¹⁰⁸ end.
 O churl.¹⁰⁹ Drunk all, and left no friendly drop
 To help me after?¹¹⁰ I will kiss thy lips.
 Haply¹¹¹ some poison yet doth hang on them 165
 To make me die with a restorative.¹¹²

103 reassuring, cheering (COMforTABLE)

104 am supposed to

105 sickness, plague

106 in thy bosom = lying against your body

107 dispose of = place (verb)

108 premature, badly timed

109 (1) rude/uncouth person, (2) miser

110 come after you

111 perhaps

112 with a restorative = from/by means of a repayment/restitution (for his not having left any poison for her)

KISSES HIM

Thy lips are warm!

Watchman 1 (*within*) Lead, boy. Which way?

Juliet Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy¹¹³ dagger.

SNATCHES ROMEO'S DAGGER

This¹¹⁴ is thy sheath. There rest, and let me die.

SHE STABS HERSELF AND FALLS ON ROMEO'S BODY

ENTER PAGE AND WATCHMAN

170 *Page* This is the place. There, where the torch doth burn.

Watchman 1 The ground is bloody. Search about the churchyard.
Go, some of you. Whoe'er you find attach.¹¹⁵

EXEUNT SOME OF THE WATCH

Pitiful sight! Here lies the County slain,
And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,
175 Who here hath lain this two days buried.
Go tell the Prince, run to the Capulets,
Raise up the Montagues. Some others search.

EXEUNT OTHERS OF THE WATCH

We see the ground¹¹⁶ whereon these woes¹¹⁷ do lie,
But the true ground¹¹⁸ of all these piteous woes

113 lucky, opportune, appropriate

114 her body

115 arrest, seize

116 earth

117 (1) miseries, misfortunes, (2) miserable/unfortunate bodies/corpses

118 foundation, basis, explanation

We cannot without circumstance¹¹⁹ descry.¹²⁰ 180

ENTER SOME OF THE WATCH, WITH BALTHASAR

Watchman 2 Here's Romeo's man. We found him in the churchyard.

Watchman 1 Hold him in safety¹²¹ till the Prince come hither.

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND ANOTHER WATCHMAN

Watchman 3 Here is a friar that trembles, sighs, and weeps.

We took this mattock and this spade from him
As he was coming from this churchyard side.¹²² 185

Watchman 1 A great suspicion.¹²³ Stay the friar too.

ENTER THE PRINCE, WITH ATTENDANTS

Prince What misadventure¹²⁴ is so early up,¹²⁵
That calls our person¹²⁶ from our morning rest?

ENTER CAPULET AND LADY CAPULET, WITH OTHERS

Capulet What should¹²⁷ it be, that they so shriek
abroad?¹²⁸

Lady Capulet The people in the street cry "Romeo," 190
Some "Juliet," and some "Paris," and all run,

119 context, causes, reasons

120 discover, detect, perceive

121 close/secure custody

122 this churchyard side = this side of the churchyard

123 great suspicion = large/weighty ground for suspicion

124 bad fortune

125 (1) out of bed, risen, (2) started, stirring, in progress

126 our person = me

127 might, must

128 shriek abroad = cry out/scream everywhere/all over

With open outcry,¹²⁹ toward our monument.

Prince What fear is this which startles¹³⁰ in our ears?

Watchman 1 Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain,

195 And Romeo dead, and Juliet, dead before,
Warm and new killed.

Prince Search, seek, and know how this foul murder
comes.

Watchman 1 Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man,¹³¹
With instruments¹³² upon them fit to open¹³³

200 These dead men's tombs.

Capulet O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter
bleeds!¹³⁴

This dagger hath mista'en,¹³⁵ for, lo, his house¹³⁶

Is empty on the back¹³⁷ of Montague,¹³⁸

And it misseathed in my daughter's bosom.

205 *Lady Capulet* O me! this sight of death is as a bell
That warns¹³⁹ my old age to¹⁴⁰ a sepulcher.

ENTER MONTAGUE, WITH OTHERS

Prince Come, Montague, for thou art early up

129 open outcry = general/universal/uncontrolled hue and cry

130 starts up, shocks, stuns

131 slaughtered Romeo's man = servant of dead Romeo

132 tools

133 fit to open = suitable for opening

134 (as bodies dead for some while do not bleed)

135 made an error/mistake

136 his house = the dagger's housing/sheath

137 on the back: swords were worn on the side, daggers at the belt, in back

138 Romeo

139 (1) informs, makes known to, (2) describes, (3) instructs, teaches

140 of, about

- To see thy son and heir more early down.¹⁴¹
- Montague* Alas, my liege,¹⁴² my wife is dead tonight.¹⁴³
 Grief of¹⁴⁴ my son's exile hath stopped her breath. 210
 What further woe conspires against mine age?¹⁴⁵
- Prince* Look, and thou shalt see.
- Montague* (to *Romeo*) O thou untaught!¹⁴⁶ What¹⁴⁷ manners is
 in this,
 To press¹⁴⁸ before thy father to a grave?
- Prince* Seal up the mouth¹⁴⁹ of outrage¹⁵⁰ for a while, 215
 Till we can clear these ambiguities¹⁵¹
 And know their spring,¹⁵² their head,¹⁵³ their true
 descent,¹⁵⁴
 And then will I be general¹⁵⁵ of your woes
 And lead you, even to death.¹⁵⁶ Meantime forbear,
 And let mischance be slave to patience.¹⁵⁷ 220

141 fallen

142 lord

143 is dead tonight = died last night

144 grief of = the grief of, grief for

145 old age

146 ignorant, unenlightened

147 what sort/kind of

148 thrust, push

149 the mouth = tomb opening

150 violent/passionate lamentation

151 doubts, uncertainties

152 source (as of a stream)

153 origin (conception, as of an idea)

154 derivation, line of descent (as of a lineage proceeding from generation to generation)

155 person in charge

156 the death of whoever is responsible

157 mischance be slave to patience = disaster/calamity be subject to/
 dominated by patience

Bring forth the parties of suspicion.¹⁵⁸

Friar I am the greatest,¹⁵⁹ able to do least,
 Yet most suspected, as the time and place
 Doth make¹⁶⁰ against me, of this direful murder,
 225 And here I stand, both to impeach and purge¹⁶¹
 Myself condemnèd¹⁶² and myself excused.¹⁶³

Prince Then say it once¹⁶⁴ what thou dost know in this.

Friar I will be brief, for my short date of breath¹⁶⁵
 Is not so long as is a tedious tale.
 230 Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet,
 And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife.
 I married them, and their stol'n¹⁶⁶ marriage day
 Was Tybalt's doomsday,¹⁶⁷ whose untimely death
 Banished the new made bridegroom from this city,
 235 For whom – and not for Tybalt – Juliet pined.¹⁶⁸
 (*to Capulet*) You, to remove that siege¹⁶⁹ of grief from her,
 Betrothed and would have married her perforce
 To County Paris. Then comes she to me
 And with wild looks bid me devise some mean¹⁷⁰

158 parties of suspicion = suspected persons

159 principal one

160 produce/cause suspicion

161 impeach and purge = accuse and clear

162 called guilty

163 freed from blame

164 once and for all, in short

165 date of breath = time/length of life

166 secret

167 death day

168 grieved, suffered, longed for

169 period of illness/difficulty

170 way (“means”)

To rid¹⁷¹ her from this second marriage, 240
 Or in my cell there¹⁷² would she kill herself.
 Then gave I her, so tutored¹⁷³ by my art,
 A sleeping potion, which so¹⁷⁴ took effect
 As I intended, for it wrought¹⁷⁵ on her
 The form¹⁷⁶ of death. Meantime I writ to Romeo 245
 That he should hither come as¹⁷⁷ this dire night
 To help to take her from her borrowed grave,
 Being the time the potion's force should cease.
 But he which¹⁷⁸ bore my letter, Friar John,
 Was stayed by accident, and yesternight 250
 Returned¹⁷⁹ my letter back. Then all alone
 At the prefixèd¹⁸⁰ hour of her waking
 Came I to take her from her kindred's vault,
 Meaning to keep her closely¹⁸¹ at my cell
 Till I conveniently¹⁸² could send¹⁸³ to Romeo. 255
 But when I came, some minute ere the time
 Of her awaking, here untimely lay
 The noble Paris and true Romeo dead.

171 free

172 in that case, then ("then and there")

173 taught, instructed

174 accordingly, thus, then

175 worked

176 visible appearance/likeness

177 precisely/exactly on ("at the time of")

178 who

179 brought

180 appointed, previously set

181 privately, secretly

182 properly, appropriately

183 send a message/messenger

She wakes,¹⁸⁴ and I entreated¹⁸⁵ her come¹⁸⁶ forth
 260 And bear this work¹⁸⁷ of heaven 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,¹⁸⁸ and to the marriage
 265 Her nurse is privy.¹⁸⁹ And if aught in this
 Miscarried¹⁹⁰ by my fault, let my old life
 Be sacrificed, some hour before his¹⁹¹ time,
 Unto¹⁹² the rigor¹⁹³ of severest law.

Prince We still have known thee for a holy man.

270 Where's Romeo's man? What can he say in this?

Balthasar I brought my master news of Juliet's death,

And then in post he came from Mantua

To this same place, to this same monument.

This letter he early¹⁹⁴ bid me give his father,

275 And threatened me with death, going¹⁹⁵ in the vault,

If I departed not¹⁹⁶ and left him there.

Prince Give me the letter. I will look on¹⁹⁷ it.

184 woke

185 asked, begged

186 to come

187 act, deed

188 (he has knowledge, as opposed to mere belief)

189 (1) cognizant, aware, (2) intimately acquainted/involved

190 came to harm, went wrong

191 its

192 according to, to the limit of

193 strictness, harshness

194 at the beginning/the start

195 should I go

196 departed not = did not leave

197 at

Where is the County's page that raised¹⁹⁸ the watch?
 (to Page) Sirrah, what made your master¹⁹⁹ in this place?

Page He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave, 280

And bid me stand aloof, and so I did.

Anon comes one with light to ope²⁰⁰ the tomb,

And by and by my master drew²⁰¹ on him,

And then I ran away to call the watch.

Prince This letter doth make good the friar's words, 285

Their course of love, the tidings²⁰² of her death,

And here he writes that he did buy a poison

Of²⁰³ a poor pothecary,²⁰⁴ and therewithal²⁰⁵

Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.

Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague, 290

See what a scourge²⁰⁶ is laid upon²⁰⁷ your hate,

That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.

And I, for winking at your discords too,

Have lost a brace²⁰⁸ of kinsmen. All are punished.

Capulet O brother Montague, give me thy hand. 295

This is my daughter's jointure,²⁰⁹ for no more

Can I demand.²¹⁰

198 roused, called

199 what made your master = what was your master doing

200 open

201 drew his sword

202 news

203 from

204 apothecary

205 (1) with that, (2) in addition

206 whip, lash, punishment

207 laid upon = brought down/put on, applied to

208 pair

209 sum left to wife if husband predeceases her

210 claim

- Montague* But I can give thee more,
 For I will raise²¹¹ her statue²¹² in pure gold,
 300 That whiles²¹³ Verona by that name is known
 There shall no figure²¹⁴ at such rate²¹⁵ be set
 As that of true and faithful Juliet.
- Capulet* As rich shall Romeo's²¹⁶ by his lady's lie,²¹⁷
 Poor sacrifices of our enmity.²¹⁸
- 305 *Prince* A glooming²¹⁹ peace this morning with it brings.
 The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
 Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things.
 Some shall be pardoned, and some punished,
 For never was a story of more woe
 310 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

EXEUNT OMNES

211 set up, build, construct

212 image, effigy

213 during the time, as long as

214 (1) person's appearance, (2) image/representation ("statue") of a person's appearance

215 value

216 Romeo's statue

217 be located/situated, remain (in modern usage, statues *stand*: these however are "images, effigies" and planned to be horizontal, not vertical)

218 (ENmiTY – the final syllable pronounced like modern "tie")

219 sullen, melancholy, dark

AN ESSAY BY HAROLD BLOOM



Shakespeare's first authentic tragedy has sometimes been critically undervalued, perhaps because of its popularity. Though *Romeo and Juliet* is a triumph of dramatic lyricism, its tragic ending usurps most other aspects of the play and abandons us to unhappy estimates of whether, and to what degree, its young lovers are responsible for their own catastrophe. Harold Goddard lamented that the Prologue's "A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life" had "surrendered this drama to the astrologers," though more than the stars in their courses are to blame for the destruction of the superb Juliet. Alas, half a century after Goddard, the tragedy more frequently is surrendered to commissars of gender and power, who can thrash the patriarchy, including Shakespeare himself, for victimizing Juliet.

Thomas McAlindon in his refreshingly sane *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* (1991) traces the dynamics of conflict in the dramatist back to the rival worldviews of Heraclitus and Empedocles, as refined and modified in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*. For Heraclitus, all things flowed, as Empedocles visualized a strife between Love and Death. Chaucer, rather than Ovid or Christopher Marlowe, was the ancestor of Shakespeare's greatest originality,

that invention of the human. Chaucer's ironic yet amiable version of the religion of love, more perhaps in his *Troilus and Criseyde* than in *The Knight's Tale*, is the essential context for *Romeo and Juliet*. Time's ironies govern love in Chaucer, as they will in *Romeo and Juliet*. Chaucer's human nature is essentially Shakespeare's: the deepest link between the two greatest English poets was temperamental rather than intellectual or sociopolitical. Love dies or else lovers die: those are the pragmatic possibilities for the two poets, each of them experientially wise beyond wisdom.

Shakespeare, somewhat unlike Chaucer, shied away from depicting the death of love rather than the death of lovers. Does anyone, except Hamlet, ever fall out of love in Shakespeare? Hamlet denies anyway that he ever loved Ophelia, and I believe him. By the time the play ends, he loves no one, whether it be the dead Ophelia or the dead father, the dead Gertrude or the dead Yorick, and one wonders if this frightening charismatic ever could have loved anyone. If there were an act 6 to Shakespeare's comedies, doubtless many of the concluding marriages would approximate the condition of Shakespeare's own union with Anne Hathaway. My observation, of course, is nonsensical if you would have it so, but most of the Shakespearean audience—then, now, and always—goes on believing that Shakespeare uniquely represented realities. Poor Falstaff never will stop loving Hal, and the admirably Christian Antonio always will pine for Bassanio. Whom Shakespeare himself loved we do not know, but the Sonnets seem more than a fiction and, at least in this aspect of life, Shakespeare evidently was not so cold as his Hamlet.

There are mature lovers in Shakespeare, most notably Antony and Cleopatra, who cheerfully sell each other out for reasons of state, yet return to each other in their suicides. Both Romeo and

Antony kill themselves because they falsely think their beloveds are dead (Antony bungles the suicide, as he does everything else). The most passionate marriage in Shakespeare, the Macbeths', subtly appears to have its sexual difficulties and ends in madness and suicide for Queen Macbeth, prompting the most equivocal of elegiac reflections by her usurping husband. "Yet Edmund was below'd," the icy villain of *King Lear* overhears himself saying, when the bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought in.

The varieties of passionate love between the sexes are endlessly Shakespeare's concern; sexual jealousy finds its most flamboyant artists in Othello and Leontes, but the virtual identity of the torments of love and jealousy is a Shakespearean invention, later to be refined by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Marcel Proust. Shakespeare, more than any other author, has instructed the West in the catastrophes of sexuality, and has invented the formula that the sexual becomes the erotic when crossed by the shadow of death. There had to be one high song of the erotic by Shakespeare, one lyrical and tragicomical paean celebrating an unmixed love and lamenting its inevitable destruction. *Romeo and Juliet* is unmatched, in Shakespeare and in the world's literature, as a vision of an uncompromising mutual love that perishes of its own idealism and intensity.

There are a few isolated instances of realistic distincts in Shakespeare's characters before *Romeo and Juliet*: Launce in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the Bastard Faulconbridge in *King John*, Richard II, self-destructive king and superb metaphysical poet. The fourfold of Juliet, Mercutio, the Nurse, and Romeo outnumber and overgo these earlier breakthroughs in human invention. *Romeo and Juliet* matters, as a play, because of these four exuberantly realized characters.

It is easier to see the vividness of Mercutio and the Nurse than it is to absorb and sustain the erotic greatness of Juliet and the heroic effort of Romeo to approximate her sublime state of being in love. Shakespeare, with a prophetic insight, knows that he must lead his audience beyond Mercutio's obscene ironies if they are to be worthy of apprehending Juliet, for her sublimity *is* the play and guarantees the tragedy of this tragedy. Mercutio, the scene stealer of the play, had to be killed off if it was to remain Juliet's and Romeo's play; keep Mercutio in acts 4 and 5, and the contention of love and death would have to cease. We overinvest in Mercutio because he insures us against our own erotic eagerness for doom; he is in the play to some considerable purpose. So, in an even darker way, is the Nurse, who helps guarantee the final disaster. The Nurse and Mercutio, both of them audience favorites, are nevertheless bad news, in different but complementary ways. Shakespeare, at this point in his career, may have underestimated his burgeoning powers, because Mercutio and the Nurse go on seducing audiences, readers, directors, and critics. Their verbal exuberances make them forerunners of Touchstone and Jacques, rancid ironists, but also of the dangerously eloquent manipulative villains Iago and Edmund.

Shakespeare's greatness began with *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594–95, revised 1597) and *Richard II* (1595), superb achievements respectively in comedy and in history. Yet *Romeo and Juliet* (1595–96) has rightly overshadowed both, though I cannot quite place it for eminence with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed simultaneously with Shakespeare's first serious tragedy. The permanent popularity, now of mythic intensity, of *Romeo and Juliet* is more than justified, since the play is the largest and most persuasive cel-

ebriation of romantic love in Western literature. When I think of the play, without rereading and teaching it, or attending yet one more inadequate performance, I first remember neither the tragic outcome nor the gloriously vivid Mercutio and the Nurse. My mind goes directly to the vital center, act 2, scene 2, with its incandescent exchange between the lovers:

Romeo Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,

That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops –

Juliet O swear not by the moon, th' 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,

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 of this contract tonight.

It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,

Too like the lightening, 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 next we meet.

Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest

Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

Romeo O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Juliet What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

Romeo Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

Juliet I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,
 And yet I would it were to give again.
Romeo Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?
Juliet But to be frank and give it 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.

[2.2.107–35]

The revelation of Juliet's nature here might be called an epiphany in the religion of love. Chaucer has nothing like this, nor does Dante, since his Beatrice's love for him transcends sexuality. Unprecedented in literature (though presumably not in life), Juliet precisely does not transcend the human heroine. Whether Shakespeare reinvents the representation of a very young woman (she is not yet fourteen) in love, or perhaps does even more than that, is difficult to decide. How do you distance Juliet? You only shame yourself by bringing irony to a contemplation of her consciousness. William Hazlitt, spurred by a nostalgia for his own lost dreams of love, caught better than any other critic the exact temper of this scene: "He has founded the passion of the two lovers not in the pleasures they had experienced, but on all the pleasures they had *not* experienced."

It is the sense of an infinity yet to come that is evoked by Juliet, nor can we doubt that her bounty is "as boundless as the sea." When Rosalind in *As You Like It* repeats this simile, it is in a tonality that subtly isolates Juliet's difference:

Rosalind O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst
 know how many fathoms deep I am in love! But it cannot

be sounded. My affection hath an unknown bottom, like
the Bay of Portugal.

Celia Or rather bottomless, that as fast as you pour
affection in, it runs out.

Rosalind No. That same wicked bastard of Venus, that was
begot of thought, conceived of spleen and born of
madness, that blind rascally boy that abuses everyone's eyes
because his own are out, let him be judge how deep I am
in love.

[4.1.195–205]

This is the sublimest of female wits, who one imagines would advise Romeo and Juliet to “die by attorney,” and who knows that women, as well as men, “have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.” Romeo and Juliet, alas, are exceptions, and die for love rather than live for wit. Shakespeare allows nothing like Rosalind's supreme intelligence to intrude upon Juliet's authentic rapture. Mercutio, endlessly obscene, is not qualified to darken Juliet's intimations of ecstasy. The play has already made clear how brief this happiness must be. Against that context, against also all of his own ironic reservations, Shakespeare allows Juliet the most exalted declaration of romantic love in the language:

Juliet But to be frank and give it 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.

[2.2.131–35]

We have to measure the rest of this play against these five lines, miraculous in their legitimate pride and poignance. They defy Dr. Johnson's wry remark on Shakespeare's rhetorical extravagances throughout the play: "his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected deprivations." Molly Mahood, noting that there are at least 175 puns and allied wordplays in *Romeo and Juliet*, finds them appropriate to a riddling drama where "Death has long been Romeo's rival and enjoys Juliet at the last," an appropriate finale for doom-eager lovers. Yet little in the drama suggests that Romeo and Juliet are in love with death, as well as with each other. Shakespeare stands back from assigning blame, whether to the feuding older generation, or to the lovers, or to fate, time, chance, and the cosmological contraries. Julia Kristeva, rather too courageously not standing back, rushes in to discover "a discreet version of the Japanese *Realm of the Senses*," a baroque sadomasochistic motion picture.

Clearly Shakespeare took some risks in letting us judge this tragedy for ourselves, but that refusal to usurp his audience's freedom allowed ultimately for the composition of the final high tragedies. I think that I speak for more than myself when I assert that the love shared by Romeo and Juliet is as healthy and normative a passion as Western literature affords us. It concludes in mutual suicide, but not because either of the lovers lusts for death, or mingles hatred with desire.

Mercutio is the most notorious scene stealer in all of Shakespeare, and there is a tradition (reported by John Dryden) that Shakespeare declared he was obliged to kill off Mercutio, lest Mercutio kill Shakespeare and hence the play. Dr. Johnson rightly commended Mercutio for wit, gaiety, and courage; presumably the

great critic chose to ignore that Mercutio also is obscene, heartless, and quarrelsome. Mercutio promises a grand comic role, and yet disturbs us also with his extraordinary rhapsody concerning Queen Mab, who at first seems to belong more to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* than to *Romeo and Juliet*:

Mercutio O then I see Queen Mab hath 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
 Athwart 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's web,
 Her collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams;
 Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;
 Her wagoner, 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' mine the fairies' coachmakers.
 And in this state she gallops night by night
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
 O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on curtsies straight;
 O'er lawyers' fingers who straight dream on fees;
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
 Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues
 Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.

Sometimes she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;
 And sometime comes she with a tithe pig's tail
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
 Then dreams he of another benefice.
 Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
 Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon
 Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
 And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
 That plats the manes of horses in the night
 And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hair,
 Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.
 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 —

[I.4.53–95]

Romeo interrupts, since clearly Mercutio never stops once started. This mercurial vision of Queen Mab—where “Queen” probably means a whore, and Mab refers to a Celtic fairy, who frequently manifests as a will-o’-the-wisp—is anything but out of character. Mercutio’s Mab is the midwife of our erotic dreams, aiding us to give birth to our deep fantasies, and she appears to possess a childlike charm for much of the length of Mercutio’s description. But since he is a major instance of what D. H. Lawrence was to call “sex-in-the-head,” Mercutio is setting us up for the

revelation of Mab as the nightmare, the incubus who impregnates maids. Romeo interrupts to say: "Thou talkst of nothing," where "nothing" is another slang term for the vagina. Mercutio's bawdy obsessiveness is splendidly employed by Shakespeare as a reduction of Romeo and Juliet's honest exaltation of their passion. Directly before their first rendezvous, we hear Mercutio at his most obscenely exuberant pitch:

If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
 Now will he 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 pop'rin pear!

[2.1.33–38]

Mercutio's reference is to Rosaline, Romeo's beloved before he falls, at first glance, in love with Juliet, who instantly reciprocates. The medlar, rotten with ripeness, popularly was believed to have the likeness of the female genitalia, and "to meddle" meant to perform sexual intercourse. Mercutio happily also cites a popular name for the medlar, the open arse, as well as the pop'rin pear, at once pop-her-in her open arse, and the slang name for a French pear, the Poperingle (named for a town near Ypres). This is the antithetical prelude to a scene that famously concludes with Juliet's couplet:

Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow
 That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

[2.2.185–186]

Mercutio at his best is a high-spiritual unbeliever in the religion of love, reductive as he may be:

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 berhyme her –
 Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings
 and harlots, Thisbe a gray eye or so, [. . .]

[2.4.34–40]

Obsessed as he may be, Mercutio has the style to take his death wound as gallantly as anyone in Shakespeare:

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.

[3.1.91–95]

That indeed is what in his death Mercutio becomes, a plague upon both Romeo of the Montagues and Juliet of the Capulets, since henceforward the tragedy speeds on to its final double catastrophe. Shakespeare is already Shakespeare in his subtle patterning, although rather overlyrical still in his style. The two fatal figures in the play are its two liveliest comics, Mercutio and the Nurse. Mercutio's aggressivity has prepared the destruction of love, though there is no negative impulse in Mercutio, who dies by the tragic irony that Romeo's intervention in the duel with Tybalt is prompted by love for Juliet, a relationship of which Mercutio is totally unaware. Mercutio is victimized by what is most central to the play, and yet he dies without knowing what *Romeo*

and Juliet is all about: the tragedy of authentic romantic love. For Mercutio, that is nonsense: love is an open arse and a pop'rin pear. To die as love's martyr, as it were, when you do not believe in the religion of love, and do not even know what you are dying for, is a grotesque irony that foreshadows the dreadful ironies that will destroy Juliet and Romeo alike as the play concludes.

Juliet's Nurse, despite her popularity, is altogether a much darker figure. Like Mercutio, she is inwardly cold, even toward Juliet, whom she has raised. Her language captivates us, as does Mercutio's, but Shakespeare gives both of them hidden natures much at variance with their exuberant personalities. Mercutio's incessant bawdiness is the mask for what may be a repressed homoeroticism, and like his violence may indicate a flight from the acute sensibility at work in the Queen Mab speech until it too transmutes into obscenity. The Nurse is even more complex; her apparent vitalism and her propulsive flood of language beguile us in her first full speech:

Even or odd, of all days in the year,
 Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.
 Susan and she (God rest all Christian souls)
 Were of an age. 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 wean'd (I never shall forget it),
 Of all the days of the year, upon that day.
 For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,

Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall.
 My lord and you were then at Mantua.
 Nay, I do bear a brain. But as I said,
 When it did taste the wormwood 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 dovehouse! 'Twas no need, I trow,
 To bid me trudge.
 And since that time it is eleven years.
 For then she could stand high lone. Nay, by th' rood,
 She could have run and waddled all about;
 For even the day before she broke her brow,
 And then my husband – God be with his soul,
 'A 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 left crying, and said "Ay."
 To see now how a jest shall come about.
 I warrant, an I should live a thousand years
 I never should forget it. "Wilt thou not, Jule?" quoth he,
 And, pretty fool, it stinted and said "Ay."

[I.3.16–48]

Her speech is shrewd and not so simple as first it sounds, and comes short of poignance, because already there is something antipathetic in the Nurse. Juliet, like her late twin sister, Susan, is too good for the Nurse, and there is an edge to the account of the weaning that is bothersome, since we do not hear the accents of love.

Shakespeare delays any more ultimate revelation of the Nurse's nature until the crucial scene where she fails Juliet. The exchanges here need to be quoted at length, because Juliet's shock is a new effect for Shakespeare. The Nurse is the person who has been closest to Juliet for all the fourteen years of her life, and suddenly Juliet realizes that what has seemed loyalty and care is something else.

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 say'st 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 dishclout 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

As living here and you no use of him.

Juliet Speak'st 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 Laurence cell,

To make confession and to be absolved.

Nurse Marry, I will, and this is wisely done.

EXIT

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.

[3.5.205-43]

The more-than-poignant: "that heaven should practice stratagem / Upon so soft a subject as myself" is answered by the Nurse's astonishing "comfort": "it excels your first, or if it did not, / Your first is dead." The Nurse's argument is valid if convenience is everything; since Juliet is in love, we hear instead an overwhelming rejection of the Nurse, proceeding from the eloquent "amen" on to the dry: "Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much." The Nurse indeed is "Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend," and we will hardly hear from her again until Juliet "dies"

her first death in this play. Like Mercutio, the Nurse moves us at last to distrust every apparent value in the tragedy except the lovers' commitment to each other.

Juliet, and not Romeo, or even Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, dies her second death as a prefiguration of Hamlet's charismatic splendor. Romeo, though he changes enormously under her influence, remains subject to anger and to despair, and is as responsible as Mercutio and Tybalt are for the catastrophe. Having slain Tybalt, Romeo cries out that he has become "Fortune's fool." We would wince if Juliet called herself "Fortune's fool," since she is as nearly flawless as her situation allows, and we recall instead her wry prayer: "Be fickle, Fortune." Perhaps any playgoer or any reader remembers best Romeo and Juliet's aubade after their single night of fulfillment:

Juliet Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.

It was the nightingale, and not the lark,

That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear.

Nightly she sings on yond pom'granate tree.

Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Romeo It was the lark, the herald of the morn,

No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks

Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day

Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.

I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Juliet Yond light is not daylight, I know it, I.

It is some meteor that the sun exhales

To be to thee this night a torchbearer

And light thee on thy way to Mantua.
 Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.
Romeo Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death.
 I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
 I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,
 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow.
 Nor 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't, my soul? Let's talk. It is not day.

Juliet It is, it is. Hie hence, be gone, away.
 It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
 Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
 Some say the lark makes sweet division.
 This doth not so, for she divideth us.
 Some say the lark and loathèd toad change eyes.
 O now I would they had changed voices too,
 Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
 Hunting thee hence with "Hunt's up" to the day.
 O now be gone, more light and light it grows.

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

[3.5.1-36]

Exquisite in itself, this is also a subtle epitome of the tragedy of this tragedy, for the entire play could be regarded as a dawn song that, alas, is out of phase. A bemused audience, unless the director is shrewd, is likely to become skeptical that event after event arrives in the untimeliest way possible. Romeo and Juliet's aubade is so disturbing precisely because they are not courtly love sophisti-

cates working through a stylized ritual. The courtly lover confronts the possibility of a real-enough death if he lingers too long, because his partner is an adulterous wife. But Juliet and Romeo know that death after dawn would be Romeo's punishment, not for adultery, but merely for marriage. The subtle outrageousness of Shakespeare's drama is that everything is against the lovers: their families and the state, the indifference of nature, the vagaries of time, and the regressive movement of the cosmological contraries of love and strife. Even had Romeo transcended his anger; even if Mercutio and the Nurse were not quarrelsome busybodies, the odds are too great against the triumph of love. That is the aubade's undersong, made explicit in Romeo's great outcry against the contraries: "More light and light, more dark and dark our woes."

What was Shakespeare trying to do for himself as a playwright by composing *Romeo and Juliet*? Tragedy did not come easily to Shakespeare, yet all this play's lyricism and comic genius cannot hold off the dawn that will become a destructive darkness. With just a few alterations, Shakespeare could have transformed *Romeo and Juliet* into a play as cheerful as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The young lovers, escaped to Mantua or Padua, would not have been victims of Verona, or of bad timing, or of cosmological contraries asserting their sway. Yet this travesty would have been intolerable for us, and for Shakespeare: a passion as absolute as Romeo's and Juliet's cannot consort with comedy. Mere sexuality will do for comedy, but the shadow of death makes eroticism the companion of tragedy. Shakespeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*, eschews Chaucerian irony, but he takes from *The Knight's Tale* Chaucer's intimation that we are always keeping appointments we haven't made. Here it is the sublime appointment kept by Paris and

Romeo at Juliet's supposed tomb, which soon enough becomes both her authentic tomb and their own. What is left on stage at the close of this tragedy is an absurd pathos: the wretched Friar Laurence, who fearfully abandoned Juliet; a widowed Montague, who vows to have a statue of Juliet raised in pure gold; the Capulets vowing to end a feud already spent in five deaths – those of Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo, and Juliet. The closing curtain of any proper production of the play should descend upon these final ironies, presented as ironies, and not as images of reconciliation. As is *Julius Caesar* after it, *Romeo and Juliet* is a training ground in which Shakespeare teaches himself remorselessness and prepares the way for his five great tragedies, starting with the *Hamlet* of 1600–1601.

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Repeated unfamiliar words and meanings, alphabetically arranged, with act, scene, and footnote number of first occurrence

<i>'a</i>	1.3.38	<i>counsel</i>	1.1.146
<i>about</i>	1.1.118	<i>course</i>	1.4.136
<i>adventure</i>	2.2.56	<i>cousin</i>	1.1.163
<i>affections</i>	1.1.132	<i>crave</i>	1.5.109
<i>against</i>	3.4.16	<i>cull</i>	4.3.5
<i>an</i>	1.1.28	<i>dear</i>	2.2.30
<i>anon</i>	1.4.102	<i>defy</i>	5.1.19
<i>apt</i>	3.1.23	<i>desperate</i>	1.2.45
<i>aqua vitae</i>	3.2.60	<i>devise</i>	2.4.148
<i>art</i>	2.4.90	<i>doom</i>	3.1.87
<i>attend</i>	1.prologue.23	<i>draw</i>	1.1.29
<i>bandy</i>	2.5.12	<i>dry beat</i>	3.1.54
<i>beshrew</i>	2.5.24	<i>else</i>	1.1.193
<i>brief</i>	3.2.37	<i>envious</i>	1.1.153
<i>but</i>	1.1.69	<i>ere</i>	1.1.113
<i>chide</i>	2.3.76	<i>fain</i>	2.2.57
<i>conceit</i>	2.6.27	<i>fair</i>	1.prologue.3

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<i>fearful</i>	1.prologue.18	<i>presently</i>	4.1.33
<i>feast</i>	1.2.14	<i>put from</i>	3.5.60
<i>fond</i>	2.2.66	<i>remedy</i>	3.5.151
<i>gentle</i>	1.1.167	<i>rough</i>	1.1.169
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<i>hold</i>	1.5.59	<i>ruled</i>	1.1.227
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<i>livery</i>	2.2.4	<i>sirrah</i>	1.2.32
<i>look to</i>	1.5.7	<i>slave</i>	1.1.35
<i>maid</i>	1.3.58	<i>stay</i>	1.2.35
<i>mark</i>	2.4.145	<i>steal</i>	1.1.129
<i>marry</i>	1.1.53	<i>still</i>	1.1.38
<i>matter</i>	1.3.7	<i>straight</i>	1.3.86
<i>means</i>	1.1.149	<i>substance</i>	1.4.119
<i>measure</i>	1.4.16	<i>taken</i>	3.1.88
<i>morrow</i>	1.1.162	<i>true</i>	2.2.69
<i>moved</i>	1.1.30	<i>very</i>	1.3.62
<i>naught</i>	1.prologue.21	<i>villain</i>	1.1.80
<i>ne'er</i>	1.2.71	<i>want</i>	2.2.101
<i>office</i>	4.5.50	<i>warrant</i>	1.3.45
<i>parts</i>	3.3.2	<i>watch</i>	3.3.83
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<i>present</i>	4.1.41	<i>wit(s)</i>	1.1.211