

ACT 2

Act 2 Scene 1

Romeo hides from his friends, who joke about his love for Rosaline.

SCENE 1

Late Sunday night: outside Capulet's orchard. Enter Romeo alone

Romeo

Can I go forward when my heart is here?

Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.

Romeo withdraws

Enter Benvolio with Mercutio

Benvolio

Romeo! my cousin Romeo! Romeo!

Mercutio

He is wise,

And on my life hath stol'n him home to bed.

Benvolio

5 He ran this way and leapt this orchard wall.

Call, good Mercutio.

Mercutio

Nay, I'll conjure too.

Romeo! humours! madman! passion! lover!

Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh,  
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied;

10 Cry but 'Ay me!'; pronounce but 'love' and 'dove',  
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,  
One nickname for her purblind son and heir,  
Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so trim  
When King Cophetua lov'd the beggar-maid.

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

- 1 Can . . . here: can my body go away when my heart is here.  
2 earth: The human body was traditionally said to be made from 'the dust of the ground' (Genesis 2:7).  
centre: heart.

- 4 stol'n him: secretly taken himself.  
6 conjure: raise him up by magic.  
7 humours: fantasies.  
8 likeness: shape; a magician should always specify the exact form that an apparition should take.  
9 satisfied: convinced of the spirit's identity.  
10 but: only.  
'love' and 'dove': i.e. some of the typical rhymes of love poetry.  
11 my gossip Venus: my old friend Venus—the goddess of love.  
12 purblind: completely blind.  
13 Young . . . Cupid: that little beggar Cupid; Mercutio identifies Cupid with the 'Abraham men'—half-naked beggars who cheated the public by pretending madness.  
trim: neatly, accurately.  
14 King Cophetua . . . maid: A popular Elizabethan ballad tells the story of a legendary king in Africa who fell in love with a beggar-maid.  
16 The . . . dead: Romeo is like a performing monkey pretending to be dead.

Romeo is reckless + passionate - strong emotions.

Romeo already doesn't want to be apart from Juliet.

- 20 demesnes: parklands.  
21 thy likeness: your own person.

22 And if: if.

- 24 raise a spirit: call up a ghost; have an erection.  
circle: magic area (in conjuring).  
26 laid it: satisfied it.  
conjur'd it down: dismissed it.  
27 spite: injury.

- 31 consorted: associated.  
humorous: damp; causing melancholy.  
32 befits: suits.

- 33 hit the mark: achieve its aim.  
34 medlar tree: tree bearing small, brown-skinned apples which were not ripe for eating until they were ready to burst open with juice.

- 38 an open-arse: a medlar.  
a pop'rin pear: a pear named after the Flemish town Poperinghe; a slang term for 'penis'.  
39 truckle-bed: little bed on castors.  
40 field-bed: bed in the open air.

Act 2 Scene 2

Romeo has lost his heart, and Juliet sighs out her new love, unaware that Romeo is listening. When he reveals himself, they arrange for Juliet's Nurse to act as their go-between.

- 1 He . . . wound: he can laugh at scars because he has never been wounded; the rhyme with Benvolio's 'found' (scene 1, line 42) indicates that no scene break is intended—although Romeo is now inside the orchard.

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

Benvolio

And if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

Mercutio

This cannot anger him; 'twould anger him  
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle,

25 Of some strange nature, letting it there stand  
Till she had laid it and conjur'd it down:  
That were some spite. My invocation  
Is fair and honest: in his mistress' name  
I conjure only but to raise up him.

Benvolio

30 Come, he hath hid himself among these trees  
To be consorted with the humorous night:  
Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

Mercutio

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, thou a pop'rin pear!

Romeo, good night, I'll to my truckle-bed,  
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.

Come, shall we go?

Benvolio

Go then, for 'tis in vain

To seek him here that means not to be found.

[Exit with Mercutio]

SCENE 2

Very late Sunday night/early Monday morning:  
Capulet's orchard. Romeo advances

Romeo

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

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,

Shows Juliet as a source of light; sun gives life to earth—and Rom.



6 *her maid*: her votary, dedicated to Diana (goddess of the moon and patroness of virgins).

8-9 *Her . . . wear it*: Romeo compares the habitual 'greensickness' (= anaemia) of young girls ('vestals'), to the green and yellow coat worn by professional jesters.

9s.d. *aloft*: i.e. upon the balcony at the back of the stage.

11 *O that . . . were*: I wish she knew that she is the lady I love.

13 *discourses*: speaks eloquently.

17 *spheres*: orbits.

21 *airy region*: sky.  
*stream*: shine beams of light.

'Why are you Romeo?'  
Conflict in family name.

28 *winged*: winged.

29 *white . . . eyes*: eyes showing their whites as they look in wonder.  
*upturned*: upturned.

30 *fall back*: throw their heads back.

31 *lazy puffing clouds*: slow-moving puffs of cloud.

33 *wherefore . . . Romeo*: why is your name 'Romeo'.

34 *Deny your father*: refuse to acknowledge your parentage.

Asking for him  
to give up family honour.

Imagery linking J.  
and light.

Religious Imagery

5 Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

Juliet appears aloft as at a window

10 It is my lady, O it is my love:  
O that she knew she were!  
She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?  
Her eye discourses, I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:  
15 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes,  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,  
20 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night  
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O that I were a glove upon that hand,  
25 That I might touch that cheek!

Juliet

Ay me!

Romeo

[Aside]

She speaks.

O speak again, bright angel, for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,  
As is a winged messenger of heaven  
Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes  
30 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him,  
When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds,  
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

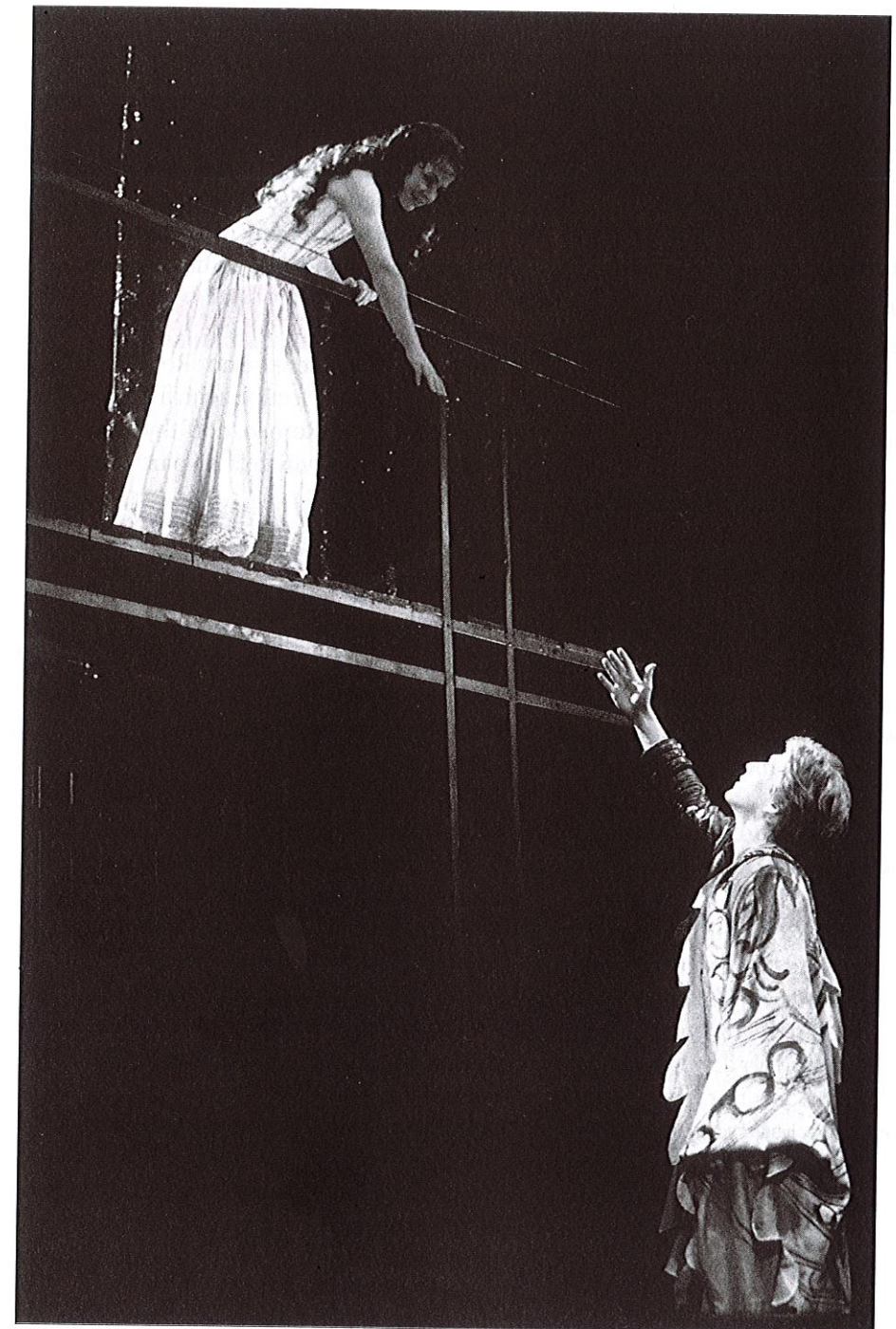
Juliet

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name;

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

Wants to marry him.



'Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,' (2, 2, 107). Michael Thomas as Romeo and Janet Maw as Juliet, Prospect Theatre Company, 1979. Photograph by Zoe Dominic.



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 nor hand nor foot,  
Nor arm nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as sweet;

45 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

Romeo

I take thee at thy word:

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

Juliet

What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night  
So stumblest on my counsel?

Romeo

By a name

I know not how to tell thee who I am.

55 My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
Because it is an enemy to thee;  
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Juliet

My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words  
Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.

60 Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

Romeo

Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

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,

65 If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

39 *Thou . . . Montague*: you are yourself  
(i.e. the man I love) even if you are a  
Montague.

Emotional conflict -  
realising his name  
doesn't define him.

46 *owes*: owns, possesses.

47 *doff*: cast aside.

48 *for*: in return for.

49 *take . . . word*: accept your promise.

52 *bescreen'd*: concealed, hidden.

53 *counsel*: private meditation.

55 *saint*: Romeo reminds Juliet of their  
earlier conversation (1, 5, 102).

61 *thee dislike*: displeases you.

Romeo

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

Juliet

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

Romeo

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

Juliet

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

Romeo

75 I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes,  
And but thou love me, let them find me here;  
My life were better ended by their hate,  
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

Juliet

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

Romeo

80 By Love, that first did prompt me to enquire:  
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.  
I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far  
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,  
I should adventure for such merchandise.

Juliet

85 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.  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke, but farewell compliment.

90 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay';  
And I will take thy word; yet if thou swear'st,  
Thou mayst prove false: at lovers' perjuries  
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;

95 Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo, but else not for the world.

66 *o'erperch*: fly over.

67 *limits*: boundaries, confines.

69 *stop*: hindrance, obstacle.

72 *Look . . . sweet*: if only you will look  
on me with kindness.

73 *proof*: armed.

76 *but*: unless.

78 *prorogued*: prorogued; postponed,  
'deferred.'  
*wanting*: lacking.

82 *pilot*: navigator.

83 *that . . . sea*: the widest shore beyond  
the farthest sea.

84 *adventure*: set out as a merchant  
tradesman.

86 *maiden blush*: the blush of a virgin.

88 *Fain would I*: I would gladly.  
*dwell on form*: observe the rules of  
decorum.

89 *compliment*: conventional courtesy.

92 *perjuries*: broken vows.

93 *Jove*: Jupiter, king of the classical  
gods.

96 *say thee nay*: (pretend to) refuse you.

97 *So . . . woo*: provided that you  
continue to court me.  
*else*: otherwise.



98 *fond*: doting, tender-hearted.99 *light*: immodest.101 *have . . . strange*: have more sophistication and can pretend to be unaffected.102 *strange*: reserved.103 *ware*: aware.104 *true-love*: faithful and loving.106 *discovered*: discovered; revealed.107 *blessed*: blessed.109 *inconstant moon*: The moon, because of its changes, was a popular emblem of inconstancy.110 *circl'd orb*: the sphere in which the moon circles the earth (according to Ptolemaic astronomy).116 *joy in thee*: rejoice in you.117 *contract*: agreement.

Cautious side to Juliet - worries their love is too quick and unwise.

In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my behaviour light:

100 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more coying to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,  
My true-love passion; therefore pardon me,  
105 And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Romeo

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,  
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

Juliet

O swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon,  
110 That monthly changes in her circl'd 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,

115 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 unadvis'd, too sudden,  
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be  
120 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

125 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 is embarrassed Romeo heard her declare her love, but she won't take it back because it's true—she is modest but honest.

129 *I would*: I wish.

131 *frank*: generous.

137 *Anon*: I'm coming.

139 *blessed*: blessed.

141 *flattering-sweet*: delightfully attractive.  
*substantial*: real.

143 *bent*: intention.

146 *rite*: ceremony.

148 *follow . . . lord*: follow you as my lord.

Nurse calling adds to rushed feeling—shows they find it difficult to be alone.

Juliet

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it;  
And yet I would it were to give again.

Romeo

130 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

135 The more I have, for both are infinite.

Nurse calls within

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!—  
Anon, good Nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true.  
Stay but a little, I will come again. [Exit above]

Romeo

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

Enter Juliet above

Juliet

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.  
If that thy bent of love be honourable,  
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,

145 By one that I'll procure 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 lord throughout the world.

Nurse

[Within] Madam!

Juliet

150 I come, anon.—But if thou meanest not well,  
I do beseech thee—

Nurse

[Within] Madam!

A hint at the fact that Juliet is as impulsive and romantic as Romeo.



151 *By and by*: immediately.

152 *strife*: endeavour.

153 *So . . . soul*: as I hope for my soul to be saved.

158-9 *O for . . . again*: Juliet wishes she could call Romeo back in the way a falconer calls his hawk to pick up the 'lure' (= a bundle of feathers baited with raw flesh).

159 *tassel-gentle*: tercel-gentle, a male hawk.



160 *Bondage is hoarse*: Juliet, bound by the dangers of her situation, cannot raise her voice.

161 *Else*: otherwise. *the cave . . . lies*: Echo, a nymph who could only repeat the tag ends of what she heard others say, fell in love with Narcissus; when he rejected her, she retreated to an empty cave.

162 *airy*: disembodied.

167 *niësse*: young unfledged hawk, nestling hawk.

Juliet

By and by I come—  
To cease thy strife, and leave me to my grief.  
Tomorrow will I send.

Romeo

So thrive my soul—

Juliet

A thousand times good night!  
[Exit above]

Romeo

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

*Retiring slowly*

*Enter Juliet again above*

Juliet

Hist, Romeo, hist! O for a falc'ner's voice,  
To lure this tassel-gentle back again:  
160 Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud,  
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,  
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine  
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

Romeo

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

Juliet

Romeo!

Romeo

My niësse?

Juliet

What a'clock tomorrow  
Shall I send to thee?

Romeo

By the hour of nine.

Juliet

I will not fail, 'tis twenty year 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 have 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:  
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,  
That lets it hop a little from his hand,  
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,  
180 And with a silken thread plucks it back again,  
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Romeo

I would I were thy bird.

Juliet

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

[Exit above]

Romeo

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!  
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!  
Hence will I to my ghostly sire's close cell,  
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. [Exit]

177 *wanton's*: pampered child's.



179 *gyves*: shackles.

188 *ghostly sire's*: spiritual father's.  
*close*: secluded.

189 *dear hap*: good fortune.

### Act 2 Scene 3

Friar Lawrence is persuaded to marry  
Romeo and Juliet.

### SCENE 3

*Monday morning: Friar Lawrence's cell. Enter Friar Lawrence alone, with a basket*

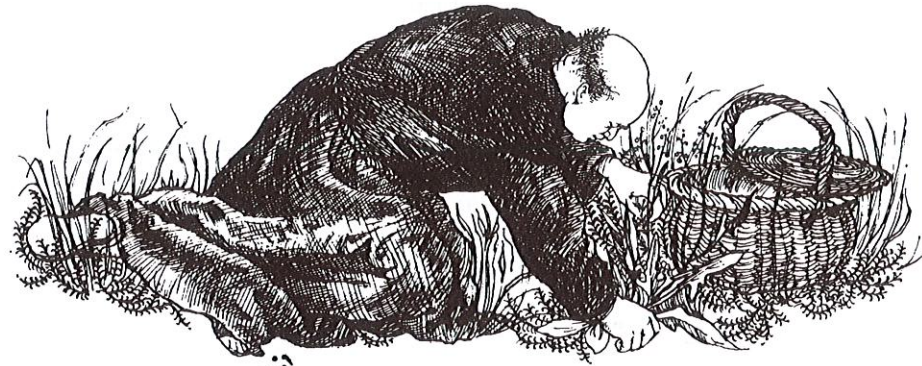
Friar Lawrence

The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,  
Check'ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light;  
And fleckled darkness like a drunkard reels  
From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels:  
5 Now ere the sun advance his burning eye,  
The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,

3 *fleckled*: dappled with streaks of red (like a drunkard's face).

4 *From forth*: out of the way of.  
*Titan's fiery wheels*: the burning wheels of the chariot of the sun-god, the Titan Helios.





7 *osier cage*: willow basket.  
*ours*: i.e. belonging to the religious  
order, and not his own possession.

8 *baleful*: harmful, poisonous.  
*juiced*: juiced.

11 *divers*: various.

12 *sucking on*: receiving nourishment  
from.

14 *None . . . some*: all of them have  
some good qualities.

15 *mickle*: great.  
*grace*: healing virtue.

19 *strain'd*: forced, perverted.

20 *true birth*: its proper nature.  
*stumbling on abuse*: finding some  
harmful application.

22 *vice . . . dignified*: evil sometimes  
made good by the right action.

23 *infant*: undeveloped.

24 *Poison . . . power*: there resides both  
poison and the healing power of  
medicine.

25 *that part*: i.e. its scent.

26 *stays . . . heart*: arrests all senses by  
stopping the heart.

27 *opposed*: opposed.  
*still*: always.

28 *grace . . . will*: divine virtue and  
unruly (human) desire.

30 *canker*: canker-worm (which devours  
the flower from inside); compare  
1, 1, 145.

I must upfill this osier cage of ours  
With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.

The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;

What is her burying grave, that is her womb;

And from her womb children of divers kind

We sucking on her natural bosom find:

Many for many virtues excellent,

None but for some, and yet all different.

O mickle is the powerful grace that lies

In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities:

For nought so vile, that on the earth doth live,

But to the earth some special good doth give;

Nor ought so good but, strain'd from that fair use,

Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.

Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,

And vice sometime by action dignified.

Enter Romeo

Within the infant rind of this weak flower  
Poison hath residence, and medicine power:

For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part,

Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.

Two such opposed kings encamp them still

In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will;

And where the worser is predominant,

Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

Romeo

Good morrow, father.

Friar Lawrence

Benedicite!

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?

Young son, it argues a distemper'd head

So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:

Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,

And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;

But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain

Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.

Therefore thy earliness doth me assure

Thou art uprous'd with some distemp'rature;

Or if not so, 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 Lawrence

God pardon sin! wast thou with Rosaline?

Romeo

With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no;

I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

Friar Lawrence

That's my good son, but where hast thou been then?

Romeo

I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again:

I have been feasting with mine enemy,

Where on a sudden one hath wounded me

That's by me wounded; both our remedies

Within thy help and holy physic lies.

I bear no hatred, blessed man; for lo,

My intercession likewise steads my foe.

Friar Lawrence

Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift,

Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Romeo

Then plainly know, my heart's dear love is set

On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;

As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,

And all combin'd, save what thou must combine

By holy marriage. When and where and how

We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,

I'll tell thee as we pass, but this I pray,

That thou consent to marry us today.

31 *Benedicite*: God bless you.

33 *argues*: suggests.  
*distemper'd*: disturbed.

34 *bid . . . to*: say goodbye to, get up  
from.

37 *unbruised*: unbruised; unharmed (by  
experience).

*unstuff'd*: untroubled.

38 *couch*: rest.

41 *hit*: guess.

45 *ghostly*: spiritual.

46 *that name's woe*: the misery I suffered  
because of the name 'Rosaline'.

51 *both our remedies*: cures for both of  
us.

53 *blessed*: blessed.

54 *intercession*: prayer, petition.  
*steads*: benefits.

55 *homely*: simple.  
*thy drift*: what you say.

56 *Riddling*: ambiguous, difficult to  
understand.

*shrift*: absolution.

57 *plainly*: simply.

63 *pass*: go along.



friar Lawrence thinks  
teen love is shallow  
and based on looks.

- 69 *Jesu Maria*: by Jesus and Mary.  
a deal of brine: a lot of salt water.  
70 *sallow*: sickly, pale (from unrequited love).  
72 *To season . . . taste*: in hope of improving hopeless love that you now no longer enjoy.

77 *wast thyself*: were sincere.

79 *sentence*: moral maxim, wise saying.

80 *may fall*: can be excused for falling.

81 *chid'st*: scolded.

R's  
Love is "illiterate";  
just repeating  
what he thinks he  
should.

86 *grace*: favour.  
*allow*: return.

88 *Thy love . . . spell*: you had learned the words by heart without understanding them.

90 *In one respect*: for a special reason.

93 *stand on*: insist on.

foreshadows end to  
conflict after their deaths.

Friar Lawrence

- 65 Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!  
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,  
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies  
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.  
Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine  
70 Hath wash'd thy fallow cheeks for Rosaline!  
How much salt water thrown away in waste,  
To season love, that of it doth not taste!  
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,  
Thy old groans yet ringing in mine ancient ears;  
75 Lo here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit  
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet.  
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,  
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.  
And art thou chang'd? Pronounce this sentence then:  
80 Women may fall, when there's no strength in men.

Romeo

Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

Friar Lawrence

For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

Romeo

And bad'st me bury love.

Friar Lawrence

Not in a grave,

To lay one in, another out to have.

Romeo

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

Friar Lawrence

O she knew well

Thy love did read by rote, that could not spell.  
But come, young waverer, come go with me,

- 90 In one respect I'll thy assistant be:  
For this alliance may so happy prove  
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

Romeo

O let us hence, I stand on sudden haste.

Friar Lawrence

Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast. [Exeunt

Warning R not to rush. Hint that  
his impulsive nature will cause troubles.

Terms of  
endearment  
demonstrate  
their close  
relationship

# Act 2 Scene 4

Benvolio and Mercutio discuss Tybalt's challenge, and Romeo joins in their laughter—until Juliet's Nurse comes to find him.

1 *should*: can.

2 *tonight*: last night.

9 *answer it*: accept the challenge.

11–12 *how . . . dared*: as much as he dares, having been challenged.

14 *run*: pierced.

15 *the very pin*: the pin marking the centre of the target.

15–16 *blind bow-boy*: Cupid.

16 *butt-shaft*: the thick end of his arrow.

19 *Prince of Cats*: Tibalt, a cat in a Dutch fable, was described as 'Prince of Cats' by Thomas Nashe, Shakespeare's contemporary.

20 *captain of compliments*: expert in the art of duelling (i.e. in the latest Italian style).

20–1 *prick-song*: printed music (sung with greater accuracy than remembered tunes).

21 *time*: rhythm.

*distance, and proportion*: the correct distance, and proper bodily movement, between the opponents; tempo and properly observed intervals in music.

21–2 *he rests . . . bosom*: he makes two feints with the briefest of pauses between them, and strikes to the heart on the third beat; a 'minim' is the shortest note in music.

23 *butcher . . . button*: An expert duellist could slice through his opponent's buttons.

24 *house*: school of fencing.

24–5 *first . . . cause*: Only two causes were recognized as acceptable for a duel: (a) being accused of major crime; (b) personal or family honour. Tybalt challenges Romeo on the second cause.

We learn Tybalt has  
sent a challenge to Romeo.

## SCENE 4

Verona: a street. Enter Benvolio and Mercutio

Mercutio

Where the dev'l should this Romeo be?

Came he not home tonight?

Benvolio

Not to his father's, I spoke with his man.

Mercutio

Why, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline,

5 Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

Benvolio

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

Mercutio

A challenge, on my life.

Benvolio

Romeo will answer it.

Mercutio

10 Any man that can write may answer a letter.

Benvolio

Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares, being dared.

Mercutio

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

Benvolio

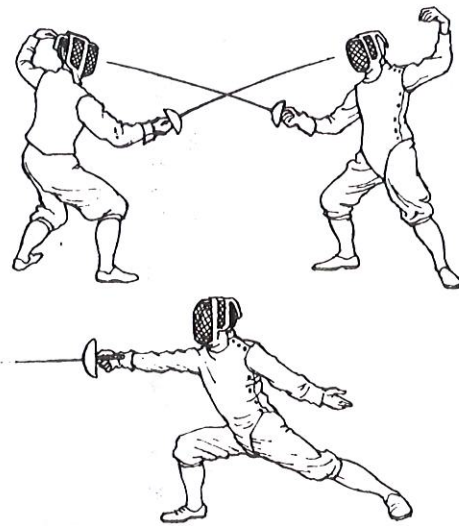
Why, what is Tybalt?

Mercutio

More than Prince of Cats. O, he's the courageous captain of compliments: he fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion; he rests his minim rests, one, two, and the third in your bosom; the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second



- 25 *immortal*: famous; death-dealing.  
 25-6 *'passado . . . hay'*: The latest technical terms for duelling: (1) a step, and thrust forward; (2) a back-handed stroke; (3) a stab to the heart (from the Italian *'ha'* = you have it).  
 28 *pox of*: plague on.  
*antic*: absurd.  
*affecting phantasies*: would-be gallant gentlemen.  
 29 *new . . . accent*: affected speakers with fancy pronunciations.  
 29-30 *'By Jesu . . . whore'*: Mercutio imitates the objects of his scorn.  
 29 *blade*: sword.  
 30 *tall*: valiant.  
 31 *grandsire*: grandfather; Mercutio addresses Benvolio as one old man to another.  
 32 *strange flies*: queer (foreign) parasites. *fashion-mongers*: followers of the latest fashion (in dress and speech).  
 33 *pardon-me's*: those who are always excusing themselves (in a French manner).  
 33-4 *stand . . . bench*: those who insist so much on the latest styles that they are uncomfortable with the old ways; Mercutio plays on *'form'* = hard seat.  
 34-5 *O their bones*: their bones are aching from sitting on the 'old bench'—or perhaps they have 'bone-ache' (syphilis, also called the 'French disease').  
 37-8 *Without . . . fishified*: Mercutio implies that Romeo is exhausted after spending the night with a prostitute; 'roe' = a) fish eggs; b) a small deer.  
 38-9 *for . . . flowed in*: in favour of the sonnets that Petrarch (a fourteenth-century Italian poet) wrote so easily.  
 39 *Laura*: Petrarch's mistress.  
*to*: in comparison with.  
 40 *love*: lover.  
*berhyme*: write verses to her.  
 41 *Dido a dowdy*: Dido (heroine of Christopher Marlowe's play *Dido, Queen of Carthage*) was a slovenly, nondescript woman.  
*Cleopatra a gipsy*: the Queen of Egypt (later the subject of *Antony and Cleopatra*) was merely a dusky wench.  
*Helen*: Helen of Troy, said to be the most beautiful woman in the world.  
*Hero*: The heroine of Marlowe's narrative poem, *Hero and Leander*.



- 25 cause. Ah, the immortal 'passado', the 'punto reverso', the 'hay'!  
 Benvolio  
 The what?  
 Mercutio  
 The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting phantasies, these new tuners of accent! 'By Jesu, a very good blade! a very tall man! a very good whore!' Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these pardon-me's, who stand so much on the new form, that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O their bones, their bones!

Enter Romeo

Benvolio  
 Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

- Mercutio  
 Without his roe, like a dried herring: O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in. Laura to his lady was a kitchen wench (marry, she had a better love to berhyme her),  
 40 Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gipsy, Helen and Hero

- 42 *hildings and harlots*: tarts and prostitutes.  
*Thisbe*: the heroine of 'Pyramus and Thisbe', Shakespeare's parody of heroic tragedy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.  
 42-3 *not to the purpose*: nothing in comparison (with Romeo's lady).  
 43 *'bon jour'*: good day.  
 44 *French slop*: loose-fitting, short breeches; Romeo still wears his masquerade costume.  
 44-5 *gave . . . counterfeit*: tricked us.  
 48 *slip*: a slang term for a counterfeit coin.  
*conceive*: understand.  
 49 *great*: important.  
 49-50 *in such . . . courtesy*: in such a contingency a man may forget good manners.  
 51-2 *That's . . . hams*: such a (sexual) condition as yours forces a man to go weak at the knees.  
 53 *cur'sy*: make a bow.



- 54 *kindly hit it*: graciously taken the point; naturally made the connection.  
 56 *pink*: (a) perfect example; (b) a kind of flower; (c) to make a pattern of holes in leather.  
 59 *then . . . flowered*: then my dancing-shoe is well decorated with flowers.  
 60 *Follow . . . jest*: follow this joke for my sake.  
 61 *single sole*: thin material of the sole.  
 62 *solely singular*: valuable in being singular.  
 63 *O single-soled . . . singleness*: a trivial joke, which is remarkable ('singular') only for being single.  
 64 *Come . . . us*: stop this punning duel.  
 65 *Swits and spurs*: use whip and spurs (to keep your wits galloping).  
*cry a match*: claim the victory.

hildings and harlots, Thisbe a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, 'bon jour'! there's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the  
 45 counterfeit fairly last night.

Romeo

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

Mercutio

The slip, sir, the slip, can you not conceive?

Romeo

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

Mercutio

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

Romeo

Meaning to cur'sy.

Mercutio

Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Romeo

55 A most courteous exposition.

Mercutio

Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

Romeo

Pink for flower.

Mercutio

Right.

Romeo

Why then is my pump well flowered.

Mercutio

60 Sure wit! Follow me this jest now, till thou hast worn out thy pump, that when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, solely singular.

Romeo

O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!

Mercutio

Come between us, good Benvolio, my wits faints.

Romeo

65 Swits and spurs, swits and spurs, or I'll cry a match.



- 66 *wild-goose chase*: a race in which the leader chooses his own course.  
 67 *wild goose*: nitwit, nincompoop.  
 68 *my whole five*: all my five wits (common-sense, memory, imagination, fancy, and judgement).  
 68-9 *Was I . . . goose*: did I score a point from you with the word 'goose' (= a prostitute; b) foolish fellow).

- 72 *bite . . . ear*: give you an affectionate nibble.

- 74 *sweeting*: apple (used for making the traditional sauce for roast goose).

- 75 *served in to*: served with.

- 76-7 *here's . . . broad*: i.e. you're stretching your little wit as far as it can go; 'cheverel' (= soft, stretchy, kid leather) begins 'ch' and ends 'l'.  
 77 *ell*: 45 inches (approx. 115 centimetres).

- 78 *I stretch it out*: I'll make it go even further.  
*broad*: (a) wide; (b) obvious; (c) indecent.

- 79 *a broad goose*: a goose that only hatches others' eggs (i.e. Romeo's own wit).

- 82 *by art*: by application of skill.

- 83 *natural*: idiot, fool.

- lolling*: with his tongue hanging out.

- 84 *bauble*: decorated stick carried by professional jester.

- 85 *Stop*: Benvolio has heard enough of these bawdy quibbles—but Mercutio takes him in another sense.

- 86 *stop in*: (a) cease; (b) stuff in.

- tale*: (a) story; (b) penis.

- against the hair*: unnaturally, against my desires.

- 87 *large*: long; Benvolio joins in the quibbling.

- 88-9 *I was . . . tale*: (a) I had come to the end of my story; (b) I had achieved orgasm.

- 90 *occupy*: (a) continue in; (b) have intercourse with.

- 91 *gear*: (a) rubbish; (b) sexual equipment.

Mercutio

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

Romeo

- 70 Thou wast never with me for any thing when thou wast not there for the goose.

Mercutio

I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Romeo

Nay, good goose, bite not.

Mercutio

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

Romeo

- 75 And is it not then well served in to a sweet goose?

Mercutio

O here's a wit of cheverel, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

Romeo

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

Mercutio *Juliet has returned, Romeo to himself - positive effect.*

- 80 Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature, for this drivelling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

Benvolio

- 85 Stop there, stop there.

Mercutio

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

Benvolio

Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

Mercutio

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

Romeo

Here's goodly gear!

Juxtaposition of bawdy sexual innuendo of Mercutio with Romeo's romanticism.

Enter Nurse and her man Peter

A sail, a sail!

Mercutio

Two, two: a shirt and a smock.

Nurse

Peter!

Peter

Anon.

Nurse

My fan, Peter.

Mercutio

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

Nurse

God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mercutio

God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.

Nurse

Is it good den?

Mercutio

'Tis no less, I tell ye, for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

Nurse

Out upon you, what a man are you?

Romeo

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

Nurse

By my troth, it is well said: 'for himself to mar', quoth'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 fault of a worse.

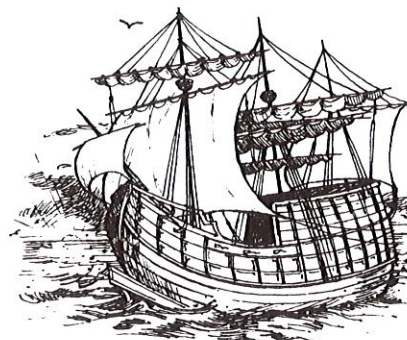
Nurse

You say well.

Mercutio

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

- 92 *A sail, a sail*: Romeo sees the Nurse coming towards them like a ship on the horizon.



- 93 *a shirt . . . smock*: a man and a woman.

- 95 *Anon*: immediately, I'm coming.

- 98 *God . . . morrow*: may God give you a good morning.

- 99 *good den*: good even (i.e. afternoon).

- 101 *dial*: sundial, clock-face; woman.

- 102 *prick*: point; penis.

- 103 *Out . . . are you*: get away with you! What kind of man are you.

- 105 *mar*: spoil.

- 106 *By my troth*: upon my word, by my faith.  
*quoth'a*: says he, indeed.

- 111 *fault*: lack.

- 113 *took*: understood—though in fact the Nurse has understood nothing.

Teasing and fun - a different side to Romeo. Juliet's positive influence.



115 *confidence*: The Nurse's malapropism (misapplied word) for 'conference' (= talk).

116 *indite*: invite; Benvolio imitates the Nurse with another malapropism.

117 *bawd*: (a) brothel-keeper, procurer; (b) hare (in North-Midland dialect). *So ho!*: The cry of a hunter when he sees his quarry.

119 *a hare . . . pie*: the sort of hare you would find in a pie for eating during Lent (a time of fasting).

120 *hoar*: mouldy (with a pun on 'whore'). *spent*: finished.

125 *too . . . score*: not worth putting on the bill.

126 *hoars*: (a) goes mouldy; (b) becomes a whore.

127 *dinner*: This was eaten about midday.

130 *Farewell . . . farewell*: Mercutio sings the refrain of a popular song.

133 *ropery*: roguery, knavery.

135 *speak*: promise.  
*stand to*: perform.

137 *And 'a speak*: if he speaks.  
*take him down*: lower his pride.

138 *Jacks*: ill-mannered fellows, knaves.

140 *flirt-gills*: loose women.  
*skains-mates*: fighting companions ('skains' = long Irish daggers).

142 *suffer*: allow.  
*use . . . pleasure*: treat me as he pleased; Peter's response gives a bawdy twist to these words.

Nurse

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

Benvolio

She will indite him to some supper.

Mercutio

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

Romeo

What hast thou found?

Mercutio

120 No hare, sir, unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

*He walks by them and sings*

An old hare hoar,

And an old hare hoar,

Is very good meat in Lent;

But a hare that is hoar

Is too much for a score,

When it hoars ere it be spent.

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

Romeo

I will follow you.

Mercutio

130 Farewell, ancient lady, farewell, lady, [*Singing*] 'lady, lady'. [*Exeunt Mercutio and Benvolio*]

Nurse

I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery?

Romeo

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

Nurse

And 'a speak any thing against me, I'll take him down, and 'a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave, I am

140 none of his flirt-gills, I am none of his skains-mates. [*She turns to Peter, her man*] And thou must stand by too and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure!

Perspective on Mercutio's character.

Peter

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

Nurse

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

Romeo

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

Nurse

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

Romeo

160 What wilt thou tell her, Nurse? thou dost not mark me.

Nurse

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

Romeo

Bid her devise  
Some means to come to shrift this afternoon,  
165 And there she shall at Friar Lawrence' cell  
Be shriv'd and married. Here is for thy pains.

Nurse

No truly, sir, not a penny.

Romeo

Go to, I say you shall.

Nurse

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

Romeo

170 And stay, good Nurse, behind the abbey wall:  
Within this hour my man shall be with thee,  
And bring thee cords made like a tackl'd stair,

151 *lead . . . paradise*: i.e. seduce her.

154 *deal double*: deceive.

155 *weak dealing*: shameful conduct.

156 *commend me*: convey my best wishes.  
*protest*: solemnly promise, vow.

Nurse knows Romeo is being sincere.

160 *mark me*: pay attention to what I am saying.

164 *shrift*: confession.

166 *shriv'd*: given absolution after confession; this was essential for receiving the sacrament of marriage.  
*pains*: trouble; Romeo offers money to the Nurse.

172 *cords*: ropes.  
*tackl'd stair*: rope ladder.



- 173 *top-gallant*: the platform at the head of a ship's mast.  
 174 *convoy*: means of access.  
 175 *quit*: requite, reward.

- 179 *secret*: trustworthy.  
 180 *Two . . . away*: two people can keep a secret when one of them (or a third person) is away.  
 181 *'Warrant*: I warrant.

- 183 *prating*: prattling, chattering.  
 184–5 *would . . . aboard*: would very much like to assert his claim; diners reserved their places by setting their own knives on the table ('board').  
 185 *had as lieve*: would as willingly.  
 186 *sometimes*: The speed of the play's action allows the Nurse very little time for such teasing!  
 187 *the properer*: the more handsome.  
 188 *clout*: washed-out rag.  
*versal*: universal, whole.  
 189 *rosemary*: the herb of remembrance, worn at weddings and funerals.  
 189–90 *both with a letter*: with the same letter (the nurse is illiterate).  
 192 *dog-name*: A Roman poet, Persius, called 'R' the dog-letter because it sounded like the growl of a dog.  
 192–3 *'R' is . . . letter*: The Nurse is about to say 'arse', but decides that this is rude and there must be another initial letter for 'Romeo' and 'rosemary'.  
 194 *sententious*: The Nurse means 'sentence' (= proverb, witty saying).

- 199 *apace*: quickly.

Which to the high top-gallant of my joy  
 Must be my convoy in the secret night.  
 175 Farewell, be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.  
 Farewell, commend me to thy mistress.

Nurse

Now God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

Romeo

What say'st thou, my dear Nurse?

Nurse

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

Romeo

'Warrant thee, my man's as true as steel.

Nurse

Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady—Lord, Lord!  
 when 'twas a little prating thing—O, there is a  
 nobleman in town, one Paris, that would *fa*n lay knife  
 185 aboard; but she, good soul, had as lieve see a toad, a very  
 toad, as see him. I anger her sometimes, and tell her that  
 Paris is the properer man, but I'll warrant you, when I  
 say so, she looks as pale as any clout in the versal world.  
 Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with  
 190 a letter?

Romeo

Ay, Nurse, what of that? Both with an R.

Nurse

Ah, mocker, that's the dog-name. R is for the—no, I  
 know it begins with some other letter—and she hath  
 the prettiest sententious of it, of you and rosemary, that  
 195 it would do you good to hear it.

Romeo

Commend me to thy lady.

Nurse

Ay, a thousand times.

[Exit Romeo

Peter!

Peter

Anon.

Nurse

[Handing him her fan] Before and apace.

[Exit after Peter

# Act 2 Scene 5

The Nurse tells Juliet about Romeo's  
 arrangements for their marriage.

- 3 *Perchance*: perhaps.

- 6 *low'ring*: gloomy.

- 7 *Therefore . . . Love*: for that reason the chariot of Venus (goddess of love) is drawn by swift-winged doves.

- 9 *upon . . . hill*: at the meridian, at its height.

- 12 *affections*: desires.

- 14 *bandy her*: strike her like a tennis ball.

- 16 *many . . . dead*: a lot of them act as though they were already dead.

- 22 *them*: the news (the noun could be treated as either singular or plural).

- 26 *jaunce*: uncomfortable jolting trip.

## SCENE 5

Capulet's house: enter Juliet

Juliet

The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse;  
 In half an hour she promis'd to return.  
 Perchance she cannot meet him: that's not so.  
 O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,  
 5 Which ten times faster glides than the sun's beams,  
 Driving back shadows over low'ring hills;  
 Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw Love,  
 And therefore hath the wind-swift 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, yet she is not come.  
 Had she affections and warm youthful blood,  
 She would be as swift in motion as a ball;  
 My words would bandy her to my sweet love,  
 15 And his to me.  
 But old folks, many feign as they were dead,  
 Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

Enter Nurse with Peter

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

Nurse

Peter, stay at the gate.

[Exit Peter

Juliet

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

Nurse

25 I am a-weary, give me leave a while.

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

Juliet

I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.  
 Nay, come, I pray thee speak, good, good Nurse, speak.

Shows her impatience; she can't wait to marry Romeo.

Shows their closeness as she feels comfortable to leave Juliet.



29 *stay a while*: wait a moment.

33 *in this delay*: for this delay.

36 *stay the circumstance*: wait for the details.

38 *simple*: foolish.

41–2 *not to be talked on*: not worth talking about.

43 *flower*: model.

44 *Go . . . God*: enough of this, my girl, behave yourself.

50 *a't'other side*: on the other side.

51 *Beshrew*: curse.

52 *jauncing*: tripping.

55 *honest*: honourable.

**Nurse**

Jesu, what haste! can you not stay a while?

30 Do you not see that I am out of breath?

**Juliet**

How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath

To say to me that thou art out of breath?

The excuse that thou dost make in this delay

Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.

35 Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.

Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance:

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

**Nurse**

Well, you have made a simple choice, you know not how to choose a man: Romeo? no, not he; though his face be

40 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 not 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, serve God. What, have you

45 dined at home?

**Juliet**

No, no! But all this did I know before.

What says he of our marriage, what of that?

**Nurse**

Lord, how my head aches! what a head have I!

It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

50 My back a't'other side—ah, my back, my back!

Beshrew 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**

55 Your love says, like an honest gentleman,

And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,

And I warrant a virtuous—Where is your mother?

**Juliet**

Where is my mother? why, she is within,

Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest:

60 'Your love says, like an honest gentleman,

"Where is your mother?"

**Nurse**

O God's lady dear,

Are you so hot? Marry come up, I trow;

Is this the poultice for my aching bones?

Henceforward do your messages yourself.

**Juliet**

65 Here's such a coil! Come, what says Romeo?

**Nurse**

Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

**Juliet**

I have.

**Nurse**

Then hie you hence to Friar Lawrence' cell,

There stays a husband to make you a wife.

70 Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks,

They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.

Hie you to church, I must another way,

To fetch a ladder, by the which your love

Must climb a bird's nest soon when it is dark.

75 I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;

But you shall bear the burden soon at night.

Go, I'll to dinner, hie you to the cell.

**Juliet**

Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell.

[Exeunt

61 *God's lady*: the Virgin Mary.

62 *hot*: impatient.

65 *coil*: fuss.

66 *shrift*: confession.

68 *hie*: go.

70 *wanton*: uncontrolled.

71 *be in scarlet*: blush.

75 *toil in your delight*: labour for your happiness.

76 *bear the burden*: carry (a) the responsibility; (b) the weight of your lover.



'Hie you hence to Friar Lawrence' cell', (2, 5, 68). Margaret Courtenay as Nurse and Georgia Slowe as Juliet, Royal Shakespeare Company, 1989.



## Act 2 Scene 6

Romeo and Juliet are married.

1-2 *So smile . . . not*: may the heavens look favourably upon this holy action, so that times to come ('after-hours') do not bring sorrow to reproach us.

3-5 *come . . . sight*: whatever sorrow may come, it will not equal ('countervail') the delight that I receive in exchange from one short minute in Juliet's sight.

6 *Do . . . hands*: all you have to do is join our hands.

8 *but*: only.

10 *powder*: gun-powder.

12 *his*: its.

13 *in . . . appetite*: ruins the appetite in tasting it.

15 *tardy*: late.

16-20 *O, so light . . . fall*: Even the Friar seems to be susceptible to Juliet's charms.

17 *everlasting flint*: hard-wearing cobbles (that she treads upon).

18 *bestride*: ride upon.  
*gossamers*: spiders' webs.

19 *idles*: floats.  
*wanton*: playful.

20 *vanity*: the insubstantiality of worldly pleasures; the Friar remembers his profession ('Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity', Ecclesiastes 1:2).

21 *ghostly confessor*: spiritual father; 'confessor' is stressed on the first syllable.

## SCENE 6

Friar Lawrence's cell: enter Friar Lawrence and Romeo

Friar Lawrence

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

Romeo

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

Friar Lawrence

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

Therefore love moderately, long love doth so;  
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Enter Juliet  
Warning Romeo to be patient - foreshadowing again.

Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot  
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint;  
A lover may bestride the gossamers  
That idles in the wanton summer air,  
And yet not fall, so light is vanity.

Juliet

Good even to my ghostly confessor.

Friar Lawrence

Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

Romeo kisses Juliet

Very short scene, showing how rushed the wedding is.

Juliet

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

Juliet returns his kiss

Romeo

Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy  
Be heap'd like mine, and that thy skill be more  
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath  
This neighbour air, and let rich music's tongue  
Unfold the imagin'd happiness that both  
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

Juliet

Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,  
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament;  
They are but beggars that can count their worth,  
But my true love is grown to such excess  
I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

Friar Lawrence

Come, come with me, and we will make short work,  
For by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one. [Exeunt

23 *As much . . . too much*: I must return his kiss, or else I shall be overpaid.

24 *measure*: measuring-cup.

26 *blazon*: describe (a heraldic term).

27 *neighbour*: surrounding.  
*rich music's tongue*: the musical harmony of your words.

28 *Unfold*: express.

29 *in either*: in each other.

30 *Conceit*: imagination.  
*matter*: substance, the inner reality.

31 *Braggs . . . ornament*: takes pride in that substance.

32 *They . . . worth*: only beggars can tell you how much money they have.

34 *sum up sum*: add up the total amount.

36 *by your leaves*: if you'll excuse me.

Irony, as audience already know they will die. Seems to be tempting fate.

Another example of how rushed this is - links to R+J's impulsivity.