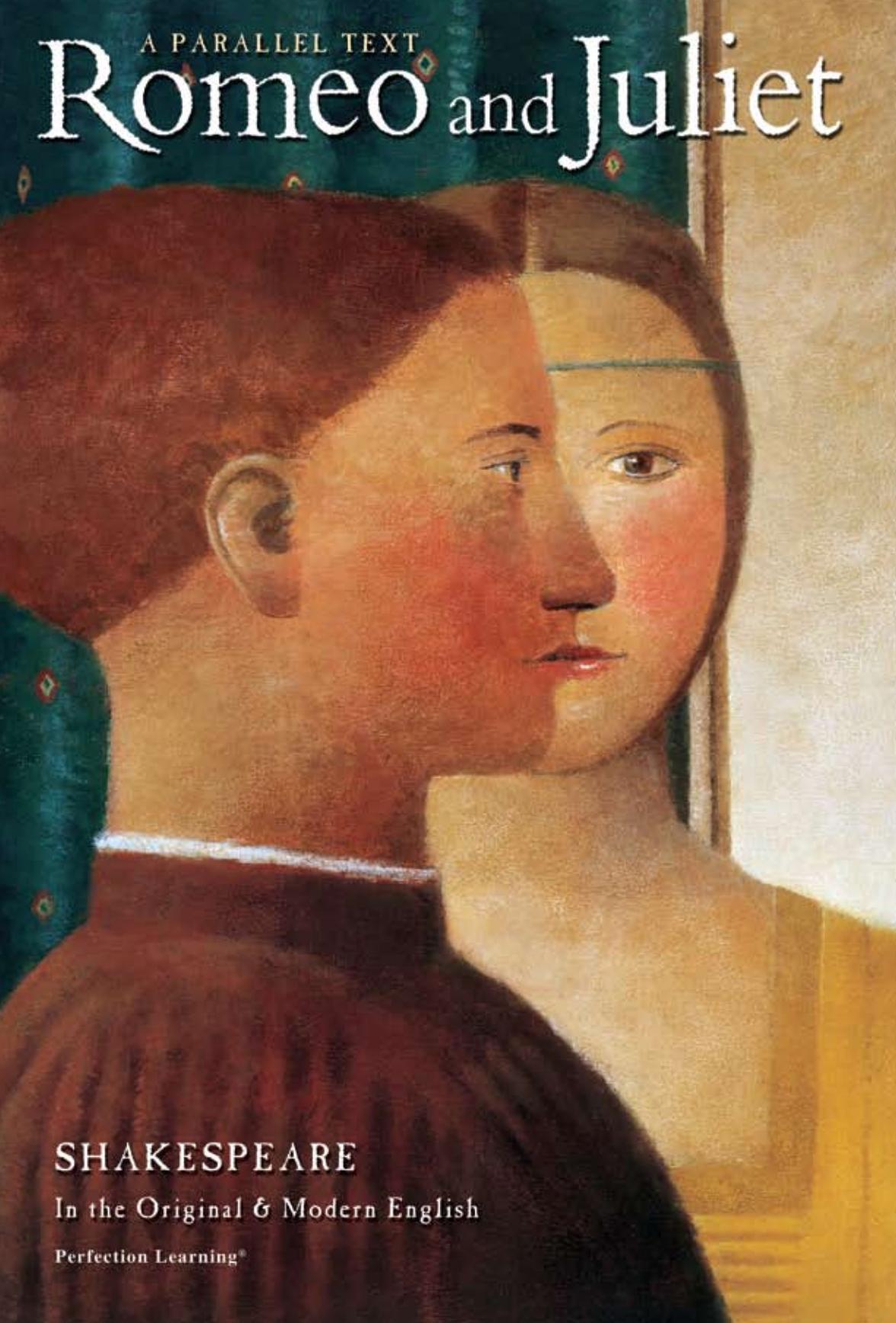


A PARALLEL TEXT

Romeo and Juliet



SHAKESPEARE

In the Original & Modern English

Perfection Learning®

THE SHAKESPEARE PARALLEL TEXT SERIES, THIRD EDITION

Romeo and Juliet

by William Shakespeare

Perfection Learning® Corporation
Logan, Iowa 51546-0500



Editorial Director Julie A. Schumacher
Senior Editor Rebecca Christian
Series Editor Rebecca Burke
Writer Janie B. Yates–Glandorf, Ph.D.
Design Mark Hagenberg, Deborah Bell
Art Research Laura Wells
Cover Art Brad Holland

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1000 North Second Avenue, P.O. Box 500
Logan, Iowa 51546-0500
Tel: 1-800-831-4190 • Fax: 1-800-543-2745

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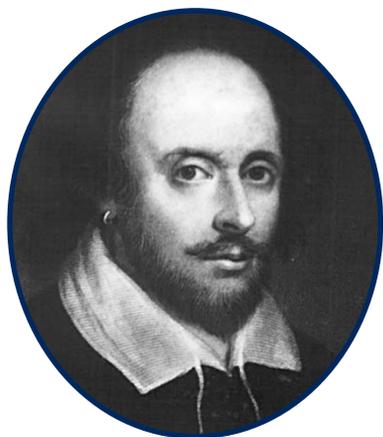
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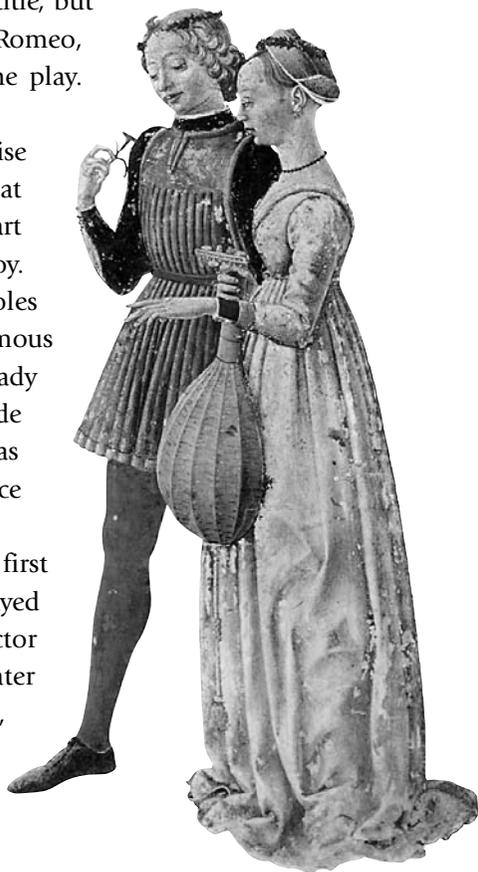
Juliet and Her Romeo

Romeo's name comes first in the play's title, but Juliet is the stronger character. She, not Romeo, makes all the important decisions in the play. She is even the first to propose marriage.

Two facts about Juliet tend to surprise today's audiences and readers. One is that she is only 13. The other is that her part was probably first played by a teenaged boy.

On Shakespeare's stage, female roles were acted by boys. One of the most famous was John Rice, who created the roles of Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra. These parts made him something of a celebrity. Rice was even invited to make a special appearance before King James I.

The part of Juliet was probably first played by Robert Goffe. He probably played Juliet opposite the famous tragic actor Richard Burbage. The older actor later created the roles of Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and King Lear. But in *Romeo and Juliet*, Goffe got the meatier role.



Juliet was first played by a woman in 1662. Since that time, the role has almost always been performed by a woman. During the 19th century, women sometimes even played the part of Romeo. The most famous female Romeo was the American actress Charlotte Cushman, who was also known for her Hamlet.

In Shakespeare's time, women were not allowed to play dramatic roles. However, they could marry at a much earlier age than is acceptable today. In Elizabethan England, a girl could legally marry at the age of 12. For boys, the legal age was 14. Wealthy families sometimes arranged marriages to protect their fortunes, but, in fact, early marriages were not common. The average wealthy woman in Elizabethan England married

at 20, the average wealthy man at 22. Still, nobles carefully guarded the legality of early marriage and sometimes arranged for their children to marry at ages even younger than the law allowed.

Early marriage was a common enough practice to be quite controversial. Certain scholarly and medical authorities decried the practice in words similar to those of Juliet's father: "And too soon marr'd are those so early made." The danger of childbirth at such an age was widely recognized. And early marriage often led to many children, something Elizabethan society discouraged for practical, economic reasons.



Betrothal



Charlotte Cushman as Romeo and her sister Susan as Juliet

A Political Romance

Audiences often think of *Romeo and Juliet* as a love story and nothing more. In fact, the play has a political dimension that is too frequently overlooked. The politics of *Romeo and Juliet* have their roots deep in the story's earliest Italian sources.

The play's plot goes back to several Italian novels. All of these novels feature two lovers named Romeo and Giulietta, whose happiness is thwarted by their feuding families, the Montecchi and Cappelletti. The first of these was written by Masuccio of Salerno during the 15th century. During the 16th century, Luigi da Porto based another novel on Masuccio's, and Matteo Bandello based yet another on Luigi's.



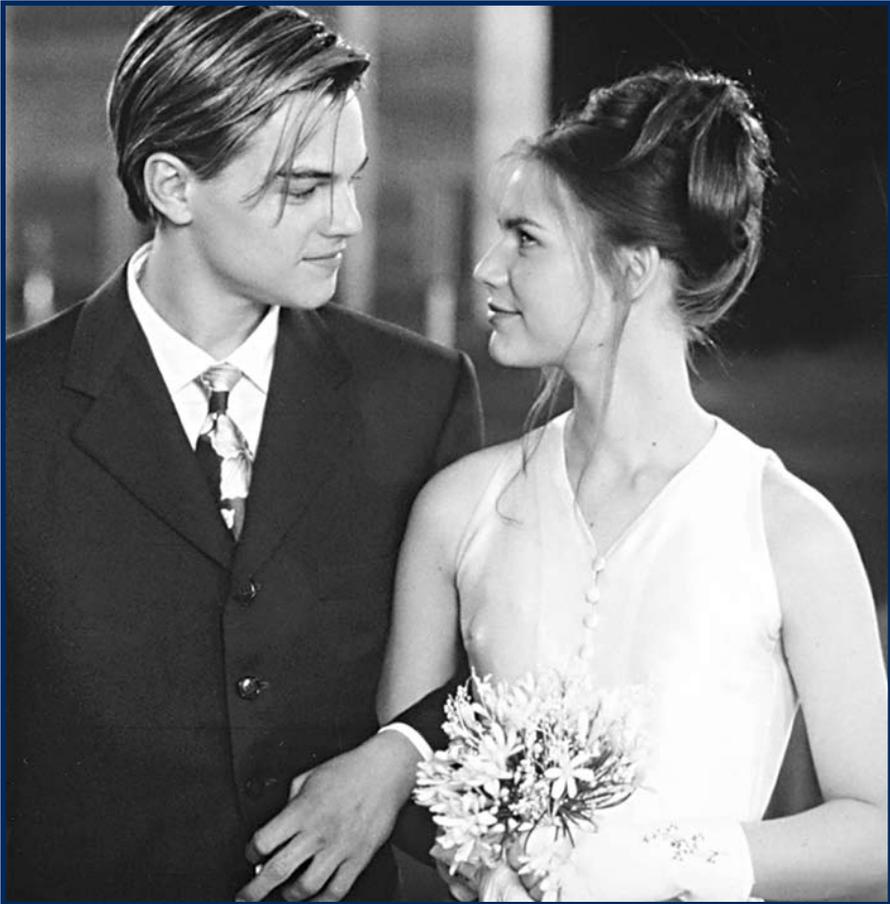
Florence in 1490



During the Italian Renaissance, powerful families often quarreled violently. One feud was between the Cerchi and Donati families in Florence. They began fighting around 1300 and barely stopped for another 50 years. The Cerchi and Donati families represented two opposing political factions—the Ghibellines and Guelphs, respectively. The Ghibellines (or the White faction) believed in a large Italian empire. The Guelphs (or the Black faction) favored independent city-states under the direction of the pope. Italian fans of *Romeo and Juliet* may have seen the lovers as tragic pawns in the struggle over the destiny of Italy itself.

Shakespeare learned their story through Arthur Brookes' narrative poem *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, published in 1562. He may have used the story of the two Italian lovers to explore a controversy in his own time—the nature of marriage. Should marriages be arranged, or should young people choose their spouses? Is marriage simply a practical way to raise children, or should personal happiness be considered?

The controversy about marriage was influenced by religious differences. Catholics tended to see happiness in this world as less important than eternal bliss. Protestants, more concerned with worldly success, generally rated marital happiness highly—sometimes even as essential to salvation. But these divisions were by no means simple and clear-cut. The purpose of marriages and the role of parents in arranging them remained quite controversial in Shakespeare's Protestant England. Which viewpoint did Shakespeare himself hold?



Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes get married in *Romeo and Juliet*. (Luhrmann, 1996)



Generations of English teachers have advised their students that Shakespeare and his audience were not as sympathetic to the actions of Romeo and Juliet as we are today. The play, they have said, is partly a cautionary tale about the importance of obeying one's parents. But as Shakespearean scholar Cedric Watts points out, the text itself does not support this interpretation.

The love between Romeo and Juliet is necessary to bring about peace between their families. And in the speech that closes the play, Prince Escalus does not place any blame upon the young lovers. Instead, he blames their families and even assumes some responsibility for failing to enforce the peace. If Shakespeare had felt that Romeo and Juliet were seriously at fault, surely he would have found a character to voice this viewpoint. Since he did not, we can only assume that, like Escalus, he blamed their families—and more sweepingly, a concept of marriage that did not properly value happiness. To a greater degree than is usually admitted, *Romeo and Juliet* is a play about gender politics.

There is even an interesting trace of feminism in Shakespeare's play. In most romantic stories of his time, a dashing hero actively woos a beautiful but passive heroine. The hero gets to behave heroically and also to speak splendid lines as he lavishes poetry on his rather witless love object. But Juliet is at least Romeo's equal as an initiator of action, and her poetry often surpasses his in beauty. Consider her breathtaking pronouncement in the balcony scene: "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."

Juliet's strength and assertiveness seem all the more remarkable because her life is so limited. Like a typical well-born Renaissance girl, she can't even come and go as she pleases, much less roam the streets at night as Romeo does with his pals Mercutio and Benvolio. Again and again, we are dazzled by her determination and resourcefulness.





Timeline

- 1562** Arthur Brookes publishes *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*.
- 1564** Shakespeare is baptized.
- 1568** Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England.
- 1572** Shakespeare begins grammar school.
- 1576** Opening of The Theatre, the first permanent playhouse in England.
- 1580** Drake sails around the world.
- 1582** Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway.
- 1583** Shakespeare's daughter Susanna is baptized.
- 1585** Shakespeare's twins are baptized.
- 1588** Spanish Armada is defeated.
- 1592-94** Plague closes all of London's theaters.
- 1594** *Titus Andronicus* becomes first printed Shakespeare play.
- 1594** Shakespeare joins the Lord Chamberlain's Men.
- 1599** Lord Chamberlain's Men build the Globe Theatre; Shakespeare is part-owner of the building.
- 1609** *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, written in 1598, published for the first time.
- The King's Men acquire the Blackfriars Playhouse.
- 1610** Shakespeare retires to Stratford.
- 1613** Globe Theatre burns to the ground.
- 1616** William Shakespeare dies at the age of 52.
- 1623** Shakespeare's wife Anne dies.
First Folio published.

Reading *Romeo and Juliet*

Using This Parallel Text

This edition of *Romeo and Juliet* is especially designed for readers who aren't familiar with Shakespeare. If you're fairly comfortable with his language, simply read the original text on the left-hand page. When you come to a confusing word or passage, refer to the modern English version on the right or the footnotes at the bottom.

If you think Elizabethan English doesn't even sound like English, read a passage of the modern version silently. Then read the same passage of the original. You'll find that Shakespeare's language begins to come alive for you. You may choose to work your way through the entire play this way.

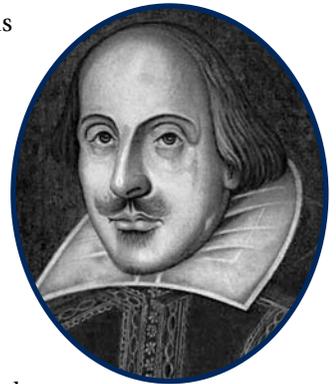
As you read more, you'll probably find yourself using the modern version less and less. Remember, the parallel version is meant to be an aid, not a substitute for the original. If you read only the modern version, you'll cheat yourself out of Shakespeare's language—his quick-witted puns, sharp-tongued insults, and evocative images.

Keep in mind that language is a living thing, constantly growing and changing. New words are invented and new definitions for old words are added. Since Shakespeare wrote over 400 years ago, it is not surprising that his work seems challenging to today's readers.

Here are some other reading strategies that can increase your enjoyment of the play.

Background

Knowing some historical background makes it easier to understand what's going on. In addition to the timeline in the front, you will find information about Shakespeare's life and Elizabethan theater at the back of the book. Reading the summaries that precede each act will also help you to follow the action of the play.



Getting the Beat

Like most dramatists of his time, Shakespeare frequently used blank verse in his plays. In blank verse, the text is written in measured lines that do not rhyme. Look at the following example.

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.

You can see that the four lines above are approximately equal in length, but they do not cover the whole width of the page as the lines in a story or essay might. They are, in fact, unrhymed verse with each line containing ten or eleven syllables. Furthermore, the ten syllables can be divided into five sections, called **iamb**s. Each iamb contains one unstressed (**u**) and one stressed (****) syllable. When the rhythm follows an unstressed/stressed pattern, it is called **iambic**. Try reading the lines below, giving emphasis to the capitalized syllable in each iamb.

u \ | u \ | u \ | u \ | u \
He JESTS | at SCARS | that NEV | er FELT | a WOUND.

u \ | u \ | u \ | u \ | u \
But SOFT! | What LIGHT | through YON | der WIN | dow BREAKS?

The length of a line of verse is measured by counting the stresses. This length is known as the **meter**, and when there are five stresses, as in the preceding lines, the pattern is known as **iambic pentameter**. Much of Shakespeare's work is written in iambic pentameter.

Of course, Shakespeare was not rigid about this format. He sometimes varied the lines by putting accents in unusual places, by having lines with more or fewer than ten syllables, and by varying where pauses occur. An actor's interpretation can also add variety. (Only a terrible actor would deliver lines in a way that makes the rhythm sound singsong!)



Renaissance Italian city

Prose

In addition to verse, Shakespeare wrote speeches in prose, or language without rhythmic structure. Look at the Servant's speech on page 46 (Act I, Scene ii). If you try beating out an iambic rhythm to these lines, you'll discover that it doesn't work because they're in prose. But once Benvolio enters and starts speaking, you'll be able to find the rhythm of iambic pentameter again. Shakespeare often uses prose for comic speeches, to show madness, and for characters of lower social rank such as servants. His upper-class characters generally do not speak in prose. But these weren't hard-and-fast rules as far as Shakespeare was concerned.

Contractions

As you know, contractions are words that have been combined by substituting an apostrophe for a letter or letters that have been removed. Contractions were as common in Shakespeare's time as they are today. For example, we use *it's* as a contraction for the words *it is*. In Shakespeare's writing you will discover that *'tis* means the same thing. Shakespeare often used the apostrophe to shorten words so that they would fit into the rhythmic pattern of a line. This is especially true of verbs ending in *-ed*. Note that in Shakespeare's plays, the *-ed* at the end of a verb is pronounced as a separate syllable. Therefore, *walked* would be pronounced as two syllables, *walk*ed*, while *walk'd* would be only one.



Speak and Listen

Remember that plays are written to be acted, not read silently. Reading out loud—whether in a group or alone—helps you to “hear” the meaning. Listening to another reader will also help. You might also enjoy listening to a recording of the play by professional actors.

Clues and Cues

Shakespeare was sparing in his use of stage directions. In fact, many of those in modern editions were added by later editors. Added stage directions are usually indicated by brackets. For example, [*aside*] tells the actor to give the audience information that the other characters can’t hear.

The Play’s the Thing

Finally, if you can’t figure out every word in the play, don’t get discouraged. The people in Shakespeare’s audience couldn’t either. At that time, language was changing rapidly and standardized spelling, punctuation, grammar, and even dictionaries did not exist. Besides, Shakespeare loved to play with words. He made up new combinations, like *fat-guts* and *mumble-news*. To make matters worse, the actors probably spoke very rapidly. But the audience didn’t strain to catch every word. They went to a Shakespeare play for the same reasons we go to a movie—to get caught up in the story and the acting, to have a great laugh, an exciting adventure, or a good cry.





Cast of Characters

The House of Capulet

JULIET

LORD CAPULET her father

LADY CAPULET her mother

NURSE servant to Juliet

PETER servant to the Nurse

TYBALT first cousin to Juliet and nephew to Lady Capulet

2. CAPULET Capulet's kinsman

SAMPSON servant to Capulet

GREGORY servant to Capulet

POTPAN servant to Capulet

other **SERVANTS**

The House of Montague

ROMEO

LORD MONTAGUE his father

LADY MONTAGUE his mother

BENVOLIO first cousin to Romeo and nephew to Lord Montague

BALTHASAR servant to Romeo

ABRAHAM servant to Montague

Others

CHORUS actor who introduces Acts I and II

ESCALUS Prince of Verona

PARIS young nobleman and kinsman to the Prince

PAGE servant to Paris

MERCUTIO friend to Romeo and kinsman to the Prince

FRIAR LAWRENCE Franciscan priest

FRIAR JOHN Franciscan priest

APOTHECARY pharmacist from Mantua

MUSICIANS, CITIZENS, TORCH-BEARERS, GUARDS,

SERVANTS, ATTENDANTS, WATCHMEN, KINSMEN from both houses

TIME the fourteenth century

PLACE Verona and Mantua, cities in northern Italy

Romeo *and Juliet* ACT I



Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh exchange a holy palmer's kiss during a production in New York. (1940)

*“My only love sprung
from my only hate!”*





Before You Read

1. The Prologue to Act I suggests that the relationship of Romeo and Juliet is doomed from the start. Some people believe that things are fated to happen, no matter what. Others believe that your actions can change the course of your life. Explain your own beliefs about fate.
2. What role do you think a family should have in the selection of their child's wife or husband?
3. As you read, notice the opposites (love/hate; light/dark) that Shakespeare provides in his language and imagery. Think about what purpose opposites might have in this play.

Literary Elements

1. A **foil** is a character in literature who has qualities that are in sharp contrast to another character, thus emphasizing the traits of each. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the responsible and highly regarded Paris is a foil to the brash and emotional Romeo.
2. **Foreshadowing** refers to hints in the text about what will occur later in the plot. The Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* forecasts that an old grudge is about to break out in renewed violence.
3. **Hyperbole** is exaggeration that is not meant to be taken literally. Lord Montague, describing his son's lovesickness, claims that Romeo locks himself up in his room "and makes himself an artificial night."
4. A **pun** is a play on words that have similar sounds but more than one possible spelling or meaning. For example, Romeo says Mercutio has "nimble soles," but he himself has "a soul of lead."
5. Good drama has **conflict**: struggle between opposing forces. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the Capulet and Montague families have been at war as long as anyone can remember. Their conflict creates problems for their families as well as Prince Escalus and the other citizens of Verona.



Words to Know

The following vocabulary words appear in Act I in the original text of Shakespeare's play. However, they are words that are still commonly used. Read the definitions here and pay attention to the words as you read the play (they will be in boldfaced type).

adversary	enemy; opponent
augmenting	adding to; enlarging
deformities	irregularities; disfigurements
discreet	showing good judgment; perceptive
disparagement	criticism; censure
nuptial	wedding; marriage
obscured [obscur'd]	hid; darkened
pernicious	harmful; destructive
portentous	ominous; threatening
posterity	future generations
prodigious	terrible; extraordinary
profane	dishonor; make impure
propagate	reproduce; increase
purged [purg'd]	got rid of; expelled



Act Summary

In the Prologue, a Chorus (or narrator) previews this play about two feuding families and the tragedy that occurs when their children meet and fall in love.

One day, in the public square in Verona, Italy, two servants from the Capulet household pick a fight with rival servants from the Montague household. The Capulets and Montagues have quarreled for so many years that nobody even knows how their feud began.

When the fight begins, a young Montague, Benvolio, tries to make peace. Instead, a fiery Capulet named Tybalt makes the tensions escalate. Soon, even onlookers and the elderly lords of the two warring sides are trying to join in the brawl.

Prince Escalus, the ruler of Verona, arrives and demands that the fighting stop. In the quarrel's aftermath, Lord Montague asks Benvolio, a friend of his son Romeo, why Romeo seems so depressed. Benvolio tracks Romeo down and learns that he is in love with Rosaline, who doesn't return his affections. Benvolio vows to make Romeo forget her.

Meanwhile, in the Capulet household, Lord Capulet and a nobleman named Paris discuss Paris's proposal of marriage to Lord Capulet's daughter Juliet. They discuss the masked banquet the Capulets will host that night and hope that Juliet will get to know Paris and agree to marry him. Of course, the hated Montagues are not invited to the banquet.

When Benvolio and Romeo catch wind of it, though, they decide to go in disguise. During the party, Tybalt guesses their identity and vows revenge on Romeo, whom he assumes has come only to mock the Capulets and cause trouble.

When Juliet catches Romeo's eye at the banquet, he instantly forgets Rosaline. By the time Romeo and Juliet realize they are from warring families, it is too late: they have fallen in love.



PROLOGUE

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
5 From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
10 And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

[Exit.]



PROLOGUE

The CHORUS enters.

CHORUS

Two equally respected families,
living in lovely Verona, where our play is set,
break out in renewed violence due to an old grudge.

The townspeople soil their hands with each other's blood.

The son of one enemy and the daughter of the other, 5
victims of unfavorable fate, commit suicide.

Their unfortunate, pitiful deaths
bury their parents' quarrel.

The sad story of their ill-fated love, 10
and of their parents' continuing anger,
which nothing except their children's deaths could end,
you will see acted in the next two hours on our stage.

If you will listen patiently,
our play will fill in what is missing from the Prologue.

Exit.

ACT I, SCENE I

[Verona. A public place.] Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, of the house of Capulet, armed with swords and bucklers.

SAMPSON

Gregory, on my word, we'll not carry coals.

GREGORY

No, for then we should be colliers.*

SAMPSON

I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

GREGORY

Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.

SAMPSON

5 I strike quickly, being mov'd.

GREGORY

But thou art not quickly mov'd to strike.

SAMPSON

A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

GREGORY

To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand; therefore, if thou art mov'd, thou run'st away.

SAMPSON

10 A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will take the wall* of any man or maid of Montague's.

GREGORY

That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes to the wall.

SAMPSON

'Tis true; and therefore women, being the weaker vessels,

2 *colliers* coal sellers

11 *take the wall* A drainage ditch ran down the center of many streets. The person of superior rank was usually granted the privilege of walking closest to the wall since this was the cleanest route.



ACT 1, SCENE 1

A public street in Verona. SAMPSON and GREGORY, servants of CAPULET, enter carrying swords and shields.

SAMPSON

Gregory, I swear it, we'll not endure insults.

GREGORY

No, for then we would be insult-sufferers.

SAMPSON

I mean, if we get angry, we'll draw our swords.

GREGORY

Yes, and if you want to live, draw your head out of the hangman's rope.

SAMPSON

I strike quickly when I'm angry.

5

GREGORY

But you're not likely to get angry quickly.

SAMPSON

A dog from Montague's house makes me angry.

GREGORY

To be angry is to move, to be brave is to stand still. Therefore, if you're angry, you'll run away.

SAMPSON

A dog of that house shall move me to be brave. I will walk near the wall if any of Montague's servants pass by.

10

GREGORY

That shows you're a weak slave, for the weakest is pushed to the wall.

SAMPSON

That's true, and therefore, women, being the weaker sex, are



15 are ever thrust to the wall; therefore I will push
Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to
the wall.

GREGORY

The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

SAMPSON

20 'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have
fought with the men, I will be cruel with the maids;
I will cut off their heads.

GREGORY

The heads of the maids?

SAMPSON

Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads;* take it
in what sense thou wilt.

GREGORY

25 They must take it in sense that feel it.

SAMPSON

Me they shall feel while I am able to stand; and 'tis known
I am a pretty piece of flesh.

GREGORY

30 'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou hadst been
poor John. Draw thy tool; here comes two of the house of
Montagues.

*Enter two other serving-men, ABRAHAM and
BALTHASAR.*

SAMPSON

My naked weapon is out. Quarrel! I will back thee.

GREGORY

How! Turn thy back and run?

SAMPSON

Fear me not.

23 *maidenheads* Sampson is making one of many bawdy puns in his exchange with Gregory. He means he will rob the girls of their virginity.



always being pushed against the wall. So I will push
Montague's men away from the wall, and his maidens to
the wall. 15

GREGORY

The quarrel is not only between our masters, but between us
and their servants, as well.

SAMPSON

It's all the same quarrel. I'll prove myself a tyrant. After I've
fought with the men, I'll be cruel to the maidens. I'll cut off
their heads. 20

GREGORY

The heads of the maidens?

SAMPSON

Yes, the heads of the maidens, or their maidenheads. Take it
in any sense you like.

GREGORY

They must take it in the sense they feel it. 25

SAMPSON

They'll feel me as long as I'm able to stand, and everyone
knows I'm a real man.

GREGORY

It's a good thing you're not a fish. If you were, you would
not give much satisfaction.—Draw your weapon! Here
come two of Montague's servants. 30

Two servants, ABRAHAM and BALTHASAR, enter.

SAMPSON

My bare sword is out. Start a quarrel! I'll back you up.

GREGORY

How will you back me up? By turning your back and running?

SAMPSON

Don't be afraid of me.

GREGORY

No, marry;* I fear thee!

SAMPSON

35 Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

GREGORY

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

SAMPSON

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

ABRAHAM

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON

40 I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAHAM

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON

[*aside to GREGORY*] Is the law of our side, if I say ay?

GREGORY

No.

SAMPSON

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

GREGORY

Do you quarrel, sir?

ABRAHAM

Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

SAMPSON

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

ABRAHAM

50 No better.

SAMPSON

Well, sir.

35 *marry* originally meant "Virgin Mary," but by Shakespeare's day it had become an exclamation comparable to "really," "indeed," etc.



GREGORY

Afraid, indeed! Don't be ridiculous.

SAMPSON

We'll get the law on our side. Let them begin.

35

GREGORY

I'll make a sour face as I pass by, and let them take it as they choose.

SAMPSON

No—as they dare, I'll thumb my nose at them. That will insult them, if they notice it.

ABRAHAM

Are you thumbing your nose at us, sir?

SAMPSON

I'm thumbing my nose, sir.

40

ABRAHAM

Are you thumbing your nose at us, sir?

SAMPSON (*to GREGORY*)

Is the law on our side if I say yes?

GREGORY

No.

SAMPSON

No, sir. I'm not thumbing my nose at you, sir. I'm just thumbing my nose, sir.

45

GREGORY

Are you trying to start a fight, sir?

ABRAHAM

A fight, sir? No, sir.

SAMPSON

If you do start a quarrel, I'm ready. My master is as good as your master.

ABRAHAM

But he's no better.

50

SAMPSON

Well—sir—



Enter BENVOLIO.

GREGORY

Say "better"; here comes one of my master's kinsmen.

SAMPSON

Yes, better, sir.

ABRAHAM

You lie.

SAMPSON

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

[They fight.]

BENVOLIO

Part, fools!

Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

[Beats down their swords.]

Enter TYBALT.

TYBALT

What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?

60 Turn thee, Benvolio; look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO

I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,

Or manage it to part these men with me.

TYBALT

What, drawn and talk of peace! I hate the word

As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

65 Have at thee, coward!

[They fight.]

Enter three or four CITIZENS *and* OFFICERS, *with*
clubs or partisans.

OFFICERS

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

Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

Enter CAPULET *in his gown, and* LADY CAPULET.



BENVOLIO *enters.*

GREGORY

You should say "better." Here comes one of my master's relatives.

SAMPSON (*to ABRAHAM*)

My master is better, sir.

ABRAHAM

You're a liar.

SAMPSON

Draw your swords, if you're real men. Gregory, give him your crushing blow. 55

They fight.

BENVOLIO

Stop it, you fools!

Put your swords away. You don't know what you're doing.

He strikes down their swords.

TYBALT *enters.*

TYBALT

Are you fighting with these cowards?

Turn around, Benvolio. I'm going to kill you. 60

BENVOLIO

I'm only trying to make peace. Put away your sword, or use it to get these men away from me.

TYBALT

You have your sword drawn and you talk about peace! I hate the word peace,

as I hate hell, all Montagues, and you.

Fight, coward! 65

They fight.

OFFICERS *and three or four* CITIZENS *enter with clubs and pikes.*

OFFICERS

Clubs, axes, and pikes! Strike! Beat them down!

Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

CAPULET, *in his robe*, and LADY CAPULET *enter.*

CAPULET

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

LADY CAPULET

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

CAPULET

70 My sword, I say! Old Montague is come,
And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

Enter MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE.

MONTAGUE

Thou villain Capulet!—Hold me not, let me go.

LADY MONTAGUE

Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

Enter PRINCE ESCALUS with his train.

PRINCE ESCALUS

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
75 Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel—
Will they not hear?—What ho! You men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your **pernicious** rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
80 Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets,
85 And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments
To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
Cank' red with peace, to part your cank' red hate;
If ever you disturb our streets again,
90 Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time, all the rest depart away.
You, Capulet, shall go along with me;
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our farther pleasure in this case,
95 To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.



CAPULET

What's all this noise? Give me my sword!

LADY CAPULET

You need a crutch! Why are you asking for a sword?

CAPULET

Give me my sword, I said. Old Montague is coming, 70
and he is waving his sword in defiance of me.

MONTAGUE *and* LADY MONTAGUE *enter*.

MONTAGUE

You're a villain, Capulet! (to LADY MONTAGUE) Don't hold me,
let me go!

LADY MONTAGUE

You shall not move a foot toward your enemy.

PRINCE ESCALUS *enters with his followers*.

PRINCE

Rebellious people, enemies to peace,
Abusers of your swords bloodied with your neighbor's blood— 75
Won't they listen?—Listen to me, you men, you beasts,
you who quench the fire of your destructive rage
with purple blood spurting from your veins.
Unless you want to be tortured, throw those angry
weapons you hold in your bloody hands to the ground 80
and hear this sentence from me, your angry prince.
Three fights arising from meaningless insults—
started by you, old Capulet, and you, old Montague—
have disturbed the quiet of our streets three times,
and caused Verona's old men 85
to throw away their proper, dignified ornaments
and carry old pikes, rusted with peace, in their equally old
hands to part your deadly hatred.
If you ever disturb our streets again,
you will have to die for breaking the peace. 90
For now, all of you go away
except you, Capulet. You'll go with me.
And you, Montague, are to come to me this afternoon
to find out what I am going to do in your case.
Go to my castle, Freetown, the common judgment place. 95
Once more, unless you want to die, all of you must leave now.

[*Exeunt all but* MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE, and
BENVOLIO.]

MONTAGUE

Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad?
Speak, nephew, were you by when it began?

BENVOLIO

Here were the servants of your **adversary**,
100 And yours, close fighting ere I did approach.
I drew to part them. In the instant came
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepar'd,
Which, as he breath'd defiance to my ears,
He swung about his head and cut the winds,
105 Who, nothing hurt withal, hiss'd him in scorn.
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
Came more and more and fought on part and part,
Till the Prince came, who parted either part.

LADY MONTAGUE

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

BENVOLIO

Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,
A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad;
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore
115 That westward rooteth from the city's side,
So early walking did I see your son.
Towards him I made, but he was 'ware of me
And stole into the covert of the wood.
I, measuring his affections by my own,
120 Which then most sought where most might not be found,
Being one too many by my weary self,
Pursued my humour not pursuing his,
And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me.

MONTAGUE

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
125 With tears **augmenting** the fresh morning's dew,
Adding to the clouds more clouds with his deep sighs;
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun



*All leave except MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE, and
BENVOLIO.*

MONTAGUE

Who started up this old quarrel again?
Speak up, nephew, were you here when it started?

BENVOLIO

Capulet's servants were here,
along with your servants, and they were fighting as I came up. 100
I drew my sword to separate them. At that moment,
the hot-tempered Tybalt arrived, with his sword drawn,
breathing defiance in my ears,
swinging his sword about my head, and slicing the winds.
But the winds, not being hurt, hissed at him in scorn. 105
While we were exchanging blows,
more and more people came to fight on each side
until the prince came and stopped the fighting.

LADY MONTAGUE

Where is Romeo? Have you seen him today?
I am glad he wasn't at this fight. 110

BENVOLIO

Madam, about an hour before the wonderful sun
peered out of the golden east,
a troubled mind drove me to take a walk.
Underneath a grove of sycamore trees,
west of the city, 115
I saw your son walking at that early hour.
I went toward him, but he saw me,
and he slipped into a thicket in the woods.
Sensing that he felt the same way I did—
wanting to get away from everyone 120
and feeling I was one too many by my weary self—
I chose to pursue my own desire rather than to pursue him.
I as gladly shunned him as he fled from me.

MONTAGUE

He has been seen there many mornings,
adding tears to the moisture of the fresh morning dew 125
and adding more clouds to clouds with his deep sighs.
But as soon as the sun, which cheers everything,



Should in the farthest east begin to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
130 Away from light steals home my heavy son,
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out,
And makes himself an artificial night.
Black and **portentous** must this humour prove
135 Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

BENVOLIO

My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

MONTAGUE

I neither know it nor can learn of him.

BENVOLIO

Have you importun'd him by any means?

MONTAGUE

Both by myself and many other friends;
140 But he, his own affections' counsellor,
Is to himself—I will not say how true—
But to himself so secret and so close,
So far from sounding and discovery,
As is the bud bit with an envious worm
145 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.
Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
We would as willingly give cure as know.

Enter ROMEO.

BENVOLIO

See, where he comes! So please you, step aside;
150 I'll know his grievance, or be much deni'd.

MONTAGUE

I would thou wert so happy by thy stay
To hear true shrift. Come, madam, let's away.

[*Exeunt* MONTAGUE and LADY.]



begins in the far east to draw
the dark curtains from dawn's bed,
my sad son creeps home, away from this light. 130
He secludes himself alone in his room,
shutting his windows, locking the lovely daylight outside,
and creating an artificial night.
His mood will become dark and ominous
unless good advice can remove the cause of his sadness. 135

BENVOLIO

My noble uncle, do you know the reason for his behavior?

MONTAGUE

I do not know it, and I cannot learn it from him.

BENVOLIO

Have you pleaded with him in any way?

MONTAGUE

I have tried, and so have many friends,
but he is the counselor of 140
his own emotions, though I will not say how well he plays
counselor.

He is so secret and close-mouthed,
so far from being found out and cured,
that he's like a bud bitten by a deadly worm before
the bud can spread its sweet leaves to the air 145
or offer its beauty to the sun.

If we could just learn what causes his sorrow,
we would willingly cure it as know about it.

ROMEO *enters.*

BENVOLIO

Here he comes. If you will, please step aside
and I'll find out what's wrong with him. If I 150
don't, you can deny any connection with me.

MONTAGUE

Stay. I hope you'll be lucky enough
to hear his true confession. (*to LADY MONTAGUE*)
Come, madam, let's go.

LORD *and* LADY MONTAGUE *exit.*

BENVOLIO

Good morrow, cousin.

ROMEO

Is the day so young?

BENVOLIO

155 But new struck nine.

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?

ROMEO

Not having that which, having, makes them short.

BENVOLIO

160 In love?

ROMEO

Out—

BENVOLIO

Of love?

ROMEO

Out of her favour, where I am in love.

BENVOLIO

165 Alas, that love, so gentle in his view,
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!

ROMEO

170 Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,
Should, without eyes, see pathways to his will!
Where shall we dine? 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.
Why, then, O brawling love!* O loving hate!
O anything of nothing first create!

171 *brawling love, etc.* Lines 171–178 are oxymorons, in which contradictions are stated. Oxymorons occurred in the “artificial” love poetry in Shakespeare’s day. Romeo’s love for Rosaline is not deep, so he is speaking “artificially.”



BENVOLIO

Good morning, cousin.

ROMEO

Is it still morning?

BENVOLIO

The clock just struck nine.

155

ROMEO

Alas, the hours seem so long.

Was that my father who left here so quickly?

BENVOLIO

Yes, it was. What sadness lengthens your hours, Romeo?

ROMEO

Not having something that, if I had it, would make the hours seem short.

BENVOLIO

Are you in love?

160

ROMEO

Out—

BENVOLIO

Of love?

ROMEO

The one I love doesn't love me.

BENVOLIO

It's too bad that love, so gentle in appearance, should be so tyrannous and rough when being experienced.

165

ROMEO

It's too bad that love, whose sight is blindfolded, can still see ways to work his will even without his eyes. *(pause)* Where shall we eat? *(pause)* My, what fight happened here?

On second thought, don't tell me, for I've heard it all.

It has much to do with hate, but more with love.

Why, then, Oh brawling love! Oh loving hate!

Oh anything first created out of nothing!

170

O heavy lightness! Serious vanity!
Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
175 Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
Dost thou not laugh?

BENVOLIO

No, coz, I rather weep.

ROMEO

180 Good heart, at what?

BENVOLIO

At thy good heart's oppression.

ROMEO

Why, such is love's transgression.
Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast,
Which thou wilt **propagate** to have it prest
185 With more of thine. This love that thou hast shown
Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.
Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs;
Being **purg'd**, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears.
190 What is it else? A madness most **discreet**,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.
Farewell, my coz.

BENVOLIO

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

ROMEO

195 Tut, I have left myself; I am not here.
This is not Romeo; he's some otherwhere.

BENVOLIO

Tell me in sadness, who is that you love?

ROMEO

What, shall I groan and tell thee?

BENVOLIO

Groan! Why, no;



Oh heavy lightness! Serious frivolity!
Deformed chaos of outwardly pretty forms!
Lead feather, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health! 175
Ever-wakeful sleep, that is not what it is!
I take no joy from this love I feel.
Are you laughing at me?

BENVOLIO

No, cousin, I'm crying.

ROMEO

Dear, good-hearted friend, why? 180

BENVOLIO

Because of your good heart's grief.

ROMEO

This is love's sin.
My own griefs make my heart heavy
which will only increase if burdened
with your sorrow, too. The love which you have shown me 185
adds more grief to my own too heavy sorrow.
Love is a smoke rising from the fumes of sighs;
when the air is cleared, love is a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes.
When frustrated, love is a sea fed by lovers' tears.
What else is love? A very wise insanity, 190
a choking bitterness, and a lasting sweet.
Good-bye, cousin.

BENVOLIO

Wait! I'll go with you.
If you leave me, you'll do me wrong.

ROMEO

Nonsense, I've lost myself; I'm not here. 195
This isn't Romeo; he's somewhere else.

BENVOLIO

Tell me in all seriousness, who is it that you love?

ROMEO

Do you want me to groan and tell you?

BENVOLIO

Groan? No,



200 But sadly tell me who.

ROMEO

Bid a sick man in sadness make his will—
A word ill urg'd to one that is so ill!
In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

BENVOLIO

I aim'd so near when I suppos'd you lov'd.

ROMEO

205 A right good mark-man! And she's fair I love.

BENVOLIO

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

ROMEO

Well, in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit
With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's wit;
And, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,
210 From Love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.
She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
Nor bide th' encounter of assailing eyes,
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold.
O, she is rich in beauty, only poor
215 That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

BENVOLIO

Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

ROMEO

She hath, and in that sparing make huge waste;
For beauty starv'd with her severity
Cuts beauty off from all **posterity**.
220 She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,
To merit bliss by making me despair.
She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow
Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

BENVOLIO

Be rul'd by me, forget to think of her.

ROMEO

225 O, teach me how I should forget to think.



but tell me, seriously, who you love.

200

ROMEO

You want a sick man, in seriousness, to make his will.
That's not good advice for someone who is so ill!
In all seriousness, cousin, I do love a woman.

BENVOLIO

I assumed that when I learned you were in love.

ROMEO

You're right on the mark! And the one I love is beautiful.

205

BENVOLIO

A bright clean target, cousin, is the easiest to hit.

ROMEO

Well, you missed the target that time. She won't be hit
with love's arrow. She has the same views as Diana, the moon
goddess.

She's well-protected in her armor of virginity.

She's safe from love's weak, childish bow.

210

She will not listen to my loving words,
or let me look at her with love in my eyes,
or allow herself to be seduced.

Oh, she is rich in beauty; only poor

in that when she dies, her treasure will die with her beauty.

215

BENVOLIO

Then has she sworn that she'll live as a virgin for now?

ROMEO

She has, and in being stingy, she is horribly wasteful.

For when beauty is starved by severe attitudes,
it is cut off from all future generations.

She's too beautiful, too wise, too wisely beautiful
to earn her way to heaven by making me suffer.

220

She vows she will not love, and because of that vow,
I'm dead, though I live to tell the fact now.

BENVOLIO

Listen to me: forget her.

ROMEO

Oh, teach me how to forget to think!

225



BENVOLIO

Just set your eyes free
to look at other beautiful women.

ROMEO

That would just be another way
to make me recall her unparalleled beauty.
Those fortunate masks that kiss beautiful ladies' foreheads, 230
being black, make us remember that they hide the beautiful.
The man who is struck blind can't forget
the precious treasure of his lost eyesight.
Show me a woman who's surpassingly beautiful,
and I'll ask what good is her beauty except as a note 235
where I could read who is still more beautiful than that beauty?
Good-bye! You can't teach me to forget her.

BENVOLIO

I'll make you change your mind or die trying.

They exit.



ACT I, SCENE II

[*A street.*] Enter CAPULET, PARIS, and the clown
[*a SERVANT*].

CAPULET

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

PARIS

Of honourable reckoning are you both;
5 And pity 'tis you liv'd at odds so long.
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

CAPULET

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

PARIS

Younger than she are happy mothers made.

CAPULET

And too soon marr'd are those so early made.
The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she;
15 She is the hopeful lady of my earth;
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,
My will to her consent is but a part;
And, she agreed, within her scope of choice
Lies my consent and fair according voice.
20 This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,
Whereto I have invited many a guest,
Such as I love; and you, among the store
One more, most welcome, makes my number
more.
At my poor house look to behold this night
25 Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven
light.
Such comfort as do lusty young men feel
When well-apparell'd April on the heel



ACT 1, SCENE 2

A street. CAPULET, PARIS, and the clown (a SERVANT) enter.

CAPULET

Montague is under bond, just like me,
and facing the same punishment. It shouldn't be hard, I think,
for men as old as we are to keep the peace.

PARIS

You both have honorable reputations,
and it's a pity you've been fighting for so long. 5
But now, my lord, what do you say about my proposed
marriage to your daughter Juliet?

CAPULET

By saying again what I told you before:
my child is too young to know the rules of society.
She isn't quite fourteen years old yet;
it will be two more years 10
before I think she'll be ready to be married.

PARIS

Younger girls than she have become happy mothers.

CAPULET

Yes, and they were disfigured by that early childbirth.
All of my children are dead except her;
she is the only hope I have in the world. 15
But go ahead and try to win her heart, gentle Paris;
my wishes only partially guarantee her consent.
If she agrees,
I'll go along with her wishes.
Tonight, I am going to give my annual masquerade banquet, 20
and I have invited many guests
who are people I love. You are invited, too.
One more very welcome guest makes the company all the
richer.
At my humble house tonight, you'll see
the most beautiful maidens of Verona that make the night 25
bright.
Such joy as red-blooded young men feel
when well-dressed spring treads on the heel

Of limping winter treads, even such delight
Among fresh female buds shall you this night
30 Inherit at my house. Hear all, all see,
And like her most whose merit most shall be;
Which, on more view of, many, mine being one,
May stand in number, though in reckoning none.
Come, go with me. [to SERVANT] Go, sirrah, trudge about
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.

[*Exeunt* CAPULET and PARIS.]

SERVANT

Find them out whose names are written here! It is written
that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard* and the
40 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. I must to the learned.
—In good time.

Enter BENVOLIO and ROMEO.

BENVOLIO

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

ROMEO

Your plaintain-leaf is excellent for that.

BENVOLIO

For what, I pray thee?

39 *shoemaker should meddle with his yard* The servant, a comic character, has everything backwards. He means: the shoemaker's leather, the tailor's wool, the fisherman's nets, and the artist's pencil.



of limping winter, just such joy
among the lovely young maidens will you find tonight
at my house. Listen to everything, look at everything, 30
and like the lady best who is most worthy.

My daughter will be among the ladies,
but she may not be the one you choose when you have seen
them all.

Come with me. (*to the SERVANT*) Go, servant, walk about
beautiful Verona; find the people 35
whose names are on these invitations and say to them
that I will be pleased to welcome them to my house tonight.

CAPULET and PARIS exit.

SERVANT

I'm to find those whose names are written here! I've heard
that the shoemaker should work with his wool, and the tailor
with his leather, the fisherman with his pencil, and the painter 40
with his net. But I have to find the people whose names are
written here, and will never find them because I can't read.
I must find someone who can read. Here's help already!

BENVOLIO and ROMEO enter.

BENVOLIO

Come on, Romeo. One fire burns out another fire; 45
one person's pain is lessened by some else's misery;
become dizzy from spinning, and be helped by reversing
the direction;
one terrible grief can be cured by someone else's pain.
Find a new infection in your eye,
and the poison of the old infection will die. 50

ROMEO

The plantain leaf is a good remedy for that.

BENVOLIO

For what, I ask you?

ROMEO

For your broken shin.

BENVOLIO

Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

ROMEO

55 Not mad, but bound more than a madman is;
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,
Whipp'd and tormented and—God-den, good fellow.

SERVANT

God gi' god-den. I pray, sir, can you read?

ROMEO

Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

SERVANT

60 Perhaps you have learn'd it without book.
But, I pray, can you read anything you see?

ROMEO

Ay, if I know the letters and the language.

SERVANT

Ye say honestly. Rest you merry!

ROMEO

Stay, fellow; I can read.
65 [*Reads.*] "Signior Martino and his wife and daughters;
County Anselme 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; my fair niece Rosaline; Livia;
70 Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt; Lucio and the
lively Helena." A fair assembly: Wither should they
come?

SERVANT

Up.

ROMEO

Wither? To supper?

SERVANT

75 To our house.



ROMEO

For your wounded shin when I kick you.

BENVOLIO

Romeo, are you crazy?

ROMEO

No, I'm not crazy, but a madman is freer than I am. 55
I'm shut up in prison, given no food,
whipped, tortured, and—(Sees the SERVANT.)—Good evening,
good fellow.

SERVANT

And a good evening to you. Sir, can you read?

ROMEO

Yes, that's my one happiness in my unhappiness.

SERVANT

Perhaps you memorize. 60
Can you read anything you see?

ROMEO

Yes, if I know the letters and the language.

SERVANT

You're an honest fellow. Have a nice day!

ROMEO

Wait, fellow, I can read. 65
(ROMEO takes the list and reads.) Signior Martino and his wife
and daughters; Count Anselme and his beautiful sisters;
Vitruvio's widow; Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces;
Mercutio and his brother Valentine; my uncle Capulet, with his wife
and daughters; my lovely niece Rosaline; Livia; Signior Valentio and
his cousin Tybalt; Lucio and the lively Helena. 70
(Returns the paper to the SERVANT.) This is a beautiful group of
people. Where are they to go?

SERVANT

Up.

ROMEO

Where?

SERVANT

To dinner, to our house. 75



ROMEO

Whose house?

SERVANT

My master's.

ROMEO

Indeed, I should have ask'd you that before.

SERVANT

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

BENVOLIO

At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou so loves,
85 With all the admired beauties of Verona.
Go thither; and with unattainted eye
Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

ROMEO

When the devout religion of mine eye
90 Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;
And these, who, often drown'd, could never die,
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!
One fairer than my love! The all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

BENVOLIO

95 Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by,
Herself pois'd with herself in either eye;
But in that crystal scales let there be weigh'd
Your lady's love against some other maid
That I will show you shining at this feast,
100 And she shall scant show well that now seems best.

ROMEO

I'll go along no such sight to be shown,
But to rejoice in splendour of mine own. [*Exeunt.*]



ROMEO

Whose house?

SERVANT

My master's.

ROMEO

Of course, I should have asked you that before.

SERVANT

Now I'll tell you without your asking. My master is the very rich
Capulet, and if you're not a Montague, I invite you to come and 80
have a drink of wine. Bless you!

The SERVANT exits.

BENVOLIO

At this party of Capulet's,
the beautiful Rosaline that you love so much will dine 85
with all of the beautiful girls of Verona.
Go there, and with an unprejudiced eye,
compare her face to some of the others I'll show you,
I'll make you think your swan is a crow.

ROMEO

When the devout belief of my eyes
asserts such a lie, then my tears will turn to fires; 90
and these eyes, often drowned in tears, could never die.
transparent unbelievers should be burned for lying!
Someone more beautiful than my love? The all-seeing sun
has never seen my love's equal since the world began.

BENVOLIO

Ha! You think she's beautiful because, having no one to 95
compare her with,
you only saw her balanced in each of your eyes.
But in your two eyes, those crystal scales of yours, weigh
your lady's love against another lady
whom I will show you at this party,
and your Rosaline will scarcely look good who now seems 100
the fairest to you.

ROMEO

I'll go with you, not to find a lovelier girl,
but to rejoice in the beauty of my own Rosaline.

They exit.



ACT I, SCENE III

[A room in Capulet's house.] Enter LADY CAPULET and NURSE.

LADY CAPULET

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

NURSE

Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,
I bade her come. What, lamb! What, ladybird!
God forbid—Where's this girl? What, Juliet!

Enter JULIET.

JULIET

5 How now! Who calls?

NURSE

Your mother.

JULIET

Madam, I am here. What is your will?

LADY CAPULET

This is the matter.—Nurse, give leave a while,
10 We must talk in secret.—Nurse, come back again;
I have rememb'ed me, thou's hear our counsel.
Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.

NURSE

Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

LADY CAPULET

She's not fourteen.

NURSE

15 I'll lay fourteen of my teeth,—
And yet, to my teen be it spoken, I have but four,—
She's not fourteen. How long is it now
To Lammas-tide?

LADY CAPULET

A fortnight and odd days.



ACT 1, SCENE 3

A room in Capulet's house. LADY CAPULET and the NURSE enter.

LADY CAPULET

Nurse, where's my daughter? Tell her to come to me.

NURSE

Now by my virginity, when I was twelve years old
I told her to come. (*Calls to JULIET.*) Lamb! Ladybird!
Heavens above, where is that girl? Juliet!

JULIET enters.

JULIET

What is it? Who's calling?

5

NURSE

Your mother.

JULIET

Madam. I am here. What do you want?

LADY CAPULET

I'll tell you.—Nurse, leave us for awhile,
we must talk in secret. (*pause*)—Nurse, come back again.
I just remembered that you are to hear our plan.
You know my daughter is at the marrying age.

10

NURSE

Indeed. Heavens, I can tell her age to the exact hour.

LADY CAPULET

She's not quite fourteen.

NURSE

I would wager fourteen of my teeth—
and yet it is my misfortune to admit I have only four—
that she's not fourteen. How many days
until Lammastide?

15

LADY CAPULET

A bit over two weeks.



NURSE

20 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,
25 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;
30 For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall;
My lord and you were then at Mantua;—
Nay, I do bear a brain;—but, as I said,
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
35 Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
To see it tetchy and fall out wi' the dug!
"Shake," quoth the dove-house. 'Twas no need, I trow,
To bid me trudge.
And since that time it is eleven years;
40 For then she could stand high-lone; nay, by the 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.
45 "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 holiday,
The pretty wretch left crying and said, "Ay."
To see, now, how a jest shall come about!
50 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."

LADY CAPULET

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



NURSE

Even or odd, of all the days of the year, 20
on the evening of July thirty-first she'll be fourteen.
Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls!—
were the same age. Well, Susan is with God.
She was too good for me. But as I said,
on the evening of July thirty-first, Juliet will be fourteen. 25
To think she might get married—I remember her birth well.
It is now eleven years since the earthquake
and since she was weaned—I'll never forget it.
Of all the days of the year, I remember that day.
I'd used a bitter herb on my breast to wean her, 30
and I was sitting in the sun next to the dovehouse wall.
You and my lord were in Mantua at the time—
I do have a good memory—but as I said,
when the baby tasted the herb on the nipple
of my breast and found out it was bitter, the pretty little thing 35
became fretful and didn't want to nurse any more!
Then the dovehouse shook from the earthquake. There was
no need
for anyone to have to tell me to run away.
Since that time it's been eleven years,
for by then she could stand up alone—indeed, I swear by the 40
cross,
she could run and waddle all around.
Just the day before, she'd fallen on her forehead,
and then my husband—God rest his soul,
he was a happy man—picked her up.
He said, "Did you fall on your face? 45
You'll fall backward when you know more,
won't you, Juliet?" And I swear,
the pretty child stopped crying and said, "Yes."
To see now how a joke turns out!
I swear, if I live a thousand years, 50
I'll never forget it. "Won't you, Juliet?" he asked.
And the pretty child stopped crying and said, "Yes."

LADY CAPULET

That's enough, Nurse. Please be quiet.

NURSE

Yes, madam; yet I cannot choose but laugh
55 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;
A perilous knock; and it cried bitterly.
"Yea," quoth my husband, "fall'st upon thy face?"
60 Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age;
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 mark thee to his grace!
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nurs'd.
65 An I might live to see thee married once,
I have my wish.

LADY CAPULET

Marry, that "marry" is the very theme
I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married?

JULIET

70 It is an honour that I dream not of.

NURSE

An honour! Were not I thine only nurse,
I would say thou hadst suck'd wisdom from thy teat.

LADY CAPULET

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

NURSE

A man, young lady! Lady, such a man
80 As all the world—why, he's a man of wax.



NURSE

Yes, madam. (*laughing*) But I can't help laughing
to think that she would stop crying and say "Yes." 55
And yet, I swear, she had a bump on her forehead
as big as a rooster's comb.
She took a bad fall, and she cried bitterly.
"So you fell on your face?" said my husband.
"You'll fall backward when you are older,
won't you, Juliet?" And she stopped crying and said, "Yes." 60

JULIET

And you must stop, too. I beg you nurse.

NURSE

Enough, I'm finished. God bless you.
You were the prettiest baby I've ever nursed.
If I can live to see you married, 65
I'll have my wish.

LADY CAPULET

Indeed, marriage is the very subject I came to talk about.
Tell me, Juliet,
how do you feel about getting married?

JULIET

It's an honor I've never dreamed of. 70

NURSE

An honor? If I weren't your only nurse,
I'd say that you sucked wisdom from your nurse's breast.

LADY CAPULET

Well, think about marriage now. There are younger women
than you,
ladies of esteem living here in Verona,
who are mothers already. If I count correctly, 75
I became your mother at the same age
you are now. So, in short,
the brave Paris wants you to be his love.

NURSE

A man, young lady! Lady, he's such a man
as the entire world—why, he's the handsomest model of a man! 80

LADY CAPULET

Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

NURSE

Nay, he's a flower; in faith, a very flower.

LADY CAPULET

What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast;
85 Read o'er the volume of young Paris's face
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
Examine every married lineament
And see how one another lends content,
And what **obscur'd** in this fair volume lies
90 Find written in the margent of his eyes.
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him, only lacks a cover.
The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
For fair without the fair within to hide.
95 That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;
So shall you share all that he doth possess,
By having him, making yourself no less.

NURSE

No less! Nay, bigger; women grow by men.

LADY CAPULET

100 Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

JULIET

I'll look to like, if looking liking move;
But no more deep will I endart mine eye
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT

105 Madam, the guests are come, supper serv'd up, you call'd,
my young lady ask'd for, the nurse curs'd in the pantry,



LADY CAPULET

There's not a summer flower in Verona that can match him.

NURSE

He is a flower, truly—a real flower.

LADY CAPULET

What do you say, Juliet? Do you think you can love the gentleman?

Tonight you'll see him at our banquet.

Read young Paris's face carefully, 85

and you'll find delight written there with beauty's pen.

Examine each different feature

and see how one feature complements the others.

Read the concealed inner qualities of character
written in the margin of his shining eyes. 90

This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
only needs a wife to make him more handsome.

The fish lives in the sea, and it's wonderful that
something beautiful is hidden in something beautiful.

In many people's eyes, a book is also glorious 95
when golden clasps on the cover bind a good story.

You too will share everything Paris has.

By marrying him, you'll not lower your position.

NURSE

No less! No, you'll be even bigger! Women get pregnant.

LADY CAPULET (to JULIET)

Tell me, briefly, can you accept Paris as a lover? 100

JULIET

I will look at him with the intention of liking

him, if looking can make me like him,

but I won't look any further

than you wish me to look.

A SERVANT enters.

SERVANT (to LADY CAPULET)

Madam, the guests have come, supper is served, you have been
called,

my young lady's presence has been requested, the nurse is 105
being cursed in the kitchen (because she isn't helping),



and everything in extremity. I must hence to wait; I
beseech you, follow straight.

LADY CAPULET

We follow thee. [SERVANT *exits.*]
Juliet, the County stays.

NURSE

Go, girl, seek happy nights to
happy days. [*Exeunt.*]



and everything is happening at once. I must go immediately
to serve. I

beg you to follow me immediately.

LADY CAPULET

We'll follow you. (SERVANT *exits*.)

Juliet, the Count is waiting.

NURSE

Go, girl, find happy nights to go with your happy days.

They leave.



ACT I, SCENE IV

[A street.] Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO,
with five or six other Maskers, Torch-bearers.

ROMEO

What, shall this speech* be spoke for our excuse?
Or shall we on without apology?

BENVOLIO

The date is out of such prolixity.
We'll have no Cupid hoodwink'd with a scarf,
5 Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,
Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper;
Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke
After the prompter, for our entrance;
But let them measure us by what they will,
10 We'll measure them a measure and be gone.

ROMEO

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

MERCUTIO

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

ROMEO

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

MERCUTIO

You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings,
And soar with them above a common bound.

ROMEO

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

1 *speech* The custom at one time had been to give a formal introduction to masqueraders.



ACT 1, SCENE 4

A street. ROMEO, MERCUTIO, and BENVOLIO enter with five or six other masqueraders and torch-bearers.

ROMEO

Shall I give a formal speech to introduce us?
Or shall we just enter without any introduction?

BENVOLIO

Those speeches are out of fashion.
We don't want a blindfolded Cupid,
Carrying his painted bow, 5
scaring ladies like a scarecrow.
And we don't want an impromptu prologue softly spoken
behind a prompter for our entrance.
Let the people measure us as they want to;
we'll dance one dance and be gone. 10

ROMEO

Give me a torch. I'm not for this leisurely dancing.
Since I'm so weighted down with sadness, I'll carry the torch.

MERCUTIO

No, gentle Romeo, we want you to dance.

ROMEO

Not me, believe me. You have dancing shoes
with light soles; I have a soul of lead 15
which holds me to the ground so I can't move.

MERCUTIO

You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings
and fly with them above an ordinary dance leap.

ROMEO

I'm too painfully pierced with Cupid's arrow
to fly with his light feathers, and so bound to the ground, 20
I cannot leap even an inch above dull sorrow.
I'm sinking under love's heavy burden.

MERCUTIO

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

ROMEO

25 Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,
Too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks like thorn.

MERCUTIO

If love be rough with you, be rough with love;
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.—
Give me a case to put my visage in, [*Puts on a mask.*]
30 A visor for a visor! What care I
What curious eye doth quote **deformities**?
Here are the beetle brows shall blush for me.

BENVOLIO

Come, knock and enter; and no sooner in,
But every man betake him to his legs.

ROMEO

35 A torch* for me; let wantons light of heart
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels,
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase:
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on.
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.

MERCUTIO

40 Tut, dun's the mouse, the constable's own word.
If thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire
Or, save your reverence, love, wherein thou stickest
Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight, ho!

ROMEO

Nay, that's not so.

MERCUTIO

45 I mean, sir, in delay
We waste our lights in vain, like lights by day.
Take our good meaning, for our judgment sits
Five times in that ere once in our five wits.*

35 *torch* This is a pun on "carrying the torch" for Rosaline.

48 *five wits* common sense, imagination, fantasy, judgment, and reasoning



MERCUTIO

And to sink in it would burden love.
That's too heavy a burden for so tender a thing as love.

ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? It's too rough, 25
too rude, too rowdy, and it pricks like a thorn.

MERCUTIO

If love is rough with you, be rough with love.
If love pricks you, prick it back, and you'll beat love down.
Give me a mask to cover my face. (*Puts on a mask.*)
A mask for an ugly face! What do I care 30
if a curious eye notices my ugliness?
The beetlelike eyebrows on this mask shall cover my
embarrassment.

BENVOLIO

Come, knock, and let's go in. And when we get in,
every man is to dance.

ROMEO

Give me a torch. Let mischievous, light-hearted men 35
dance over the floor coverings.
I take the advice of the old proverb which says,
"I'll be an onlooker and watch."
It's better to quit the game while it's still fun!"

MERCUTIO

Nonsense, like the sheriff says, be still as a mouse. 40
If you're a horse, we'll get you out of the mud,
or if you'll excuse me, out of love where you're sticking
up to your ears. Come on, we're burning daylight.

ROMEO

No, that's not true.

MERCUTIO

I mean, sir, that by delaying, 45
we waste our time in vain, like using torches by day.
Take it as I mean it, for judgment is found
in correct interpretation five times before it's found once in
our five wits.



ROMEO

And we mean well in going to this mask;
50 But 'tis no wit to go.

MERCUTIO

Why, may one ask?

ROMEO

I dream'd a dream to-night.

MERCUTIO

And so did I.

ROMEO

Well, what was yours?

MERCUTIO

55 That dreamers often lie.

ROMEO

In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.

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
60 On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Over men's noses as they lie asleep;
Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
65 Her traces of the smallest spider web,
Her collars of the moonshine's wat'ry beams,
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,
Her waggoner a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
70 Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;*
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies'
coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night

69-70 *worm . . . maid* Maids were told that if they were lazy, worms would grow in their fingers.



ROMEO

We have good intentions in going to this masquerade dance,
but it isn't intelligent to go.

50

MERCUTIO

Why, may I ask?

ROMEO

I dreamed a dream tonight.

MERCUTIO

And so did I.

ROMEO

Well, what was your dream?

MERCUTIO

That dreamers often lie.

55

ROMEO

In bed asleep, while they dream true dreams.

MERCUTIO

Oh, I see that the fairy, Queen Mab, has been with you.

She delivers babies for the fairies, and she is

no bigger than an agate for a ring

on the forefinger of a magistrate.

60

She's drawn by a team of tiny creatures

over men's noses as they lie asleep.

Her wagon spokes are made of long spiders' legs;

the cover is made of the wings of grasshoppers;

the harness is made of the smallest spider web;

65

her steeds' collars are made of the rays of watery moonbeams;

her whip is made of cricket's bone; the lash a spider's web;

her coachman is a small, grey-coated gnat,

not half as big as a little round worm

removed from the finger of a lazy maid.

70

Her chariot is an empty hazelnut shell

made by a squirrel, or an old worm,

who, ever since anyone could remember, have been the fairies'
coachmakers.

In this manner she gallops night after night



75 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
On 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,
80 Because their breath with sweetmeats tainted are.
Sometime 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,
85 Then he dreams of another benefice.
Sometime 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
90 Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
That plaits the manes of horses in the night,
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,
95 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—

ROMEO

100 Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!
Thou talk'st of nothing.

MERCUTIO

True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
105 Which is as thin of substance as the air
And more inconstant than the wind, who woos



through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love. 75

She travels over courtiers' knees, and they dream of bowing;
over lawyers' fingers, and they dream of fees;
over ladies' lips, and they dream of kisses.

Often the testy Mab blisters on the ladies' lips
because their breaths smell of too many sweets. 80

Sometimes she gallops over a courtier's nose,
and then he dreams of finding someone whose cause he can
support for a fee;

and sometimes she comes with the tail of a pig owed to the
church

and tickles a minister's nose as he sleeps,
so that he dreams of being given another well-paying post. 85

Sometimes she drives over a soldier's neck,
and he dreams of cutting foreigners' throats,
and of invasions, ambushes, Spanish knives,
and drinking toasts from glasses thirty feet deep.

Then soon he hears
drums and he awakens 90

and being frightened by the noise, he says a prayer or two
and goes back to sleep. This is that same Mab
who braids the manes of horses in the night,
and tangles dirty, unkempt hair
which, when untangled, means terrible misfortune. 95

This is the hag which presses maidens down
as they lie on their backs and teaches them to bear up
so they will have good posture. This is the
fairy woman—

ROMEO

Stop, stop, Mercutio!
You're talking nonsense. 100

MERCUTIO

True, I'm talking about dreams,
which are the children of an idle brain,
born from nothing but an empty fantasy.
Dreams are as thin as the air 105
and more likely to change than the wind, who is wooing



Even now the frozen bosom of the north,
And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,
Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

BENVOLIO

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

ROMEO

I fear, too early; for my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
115 With this night's revels, and expire the term
Of a despised life clos'd in my breast
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But He that hath the steerage of my course
Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen!

BENVOLIO

120 Strike, drum.

[They march about the stage.]

[Exeunt.]



the frozen heart of the north right now,
and, becoming angry, he puffs away from the north,
turning his face to the rainy south.

BENVOLIO

This wind you are talking about blows us away from our
purpose. 110

The banquet is about over, and we'll get there too late.

ROMEO

I am afraid we're too early, for I'm afraid
that some unpleasant events, still only destined to happen,
will bitterly begin
at this party tonight and bring to an end 115
this hateful life of mine
by some terrible, untimely death.

But God, who steers my life's course,
will give my sail direction. Let's go, merry gentlemen!

BENVOLIO

Beat your drums. 120

They march about the stage and then leave.



ACT I, SCENE V

[A hall in Capulet's house. MUSICIANS waiting.] Enter SERVING-MEN, with napkins.

1. SERVANT

Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift a trencher! He scrape a trencher!

2. SERVANT

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

1. SERVANT

5 Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard, look to the plate. Good thou, save me a piece of marchpane; and, as thou loves me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell. Antony and Potpan!

2. SERVANT

Ay, boy, ready.

1. SERVANT

10 You are look'd for and call'd for, ask'd for and sought for, in the great chamber.

3. SERVANT

We cannot be here and there too. Cheerly, boys; be brisk a while, and the longer liver take all. [*They retire.*]

Enter [CAPULET, with JULIET, TYBALT, and others of his house, meeting] the GUESTS, ROMEO, and other Maskers.

CAPULET

Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes
15 Unplagu'd with corns will walk a bout with you.
Ah, my mistresses, which of you all
Will now deny to dance? She that makes dainty,
She, I'll swear, hath corns. Am I come near ye now?
10 Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day
20 That I have worn a visor and could tell



ACT 1, SCENE 5

A hall in Capulet's house. MUSICIANS waiting. The SERVANTS enter with napkins.

FIRST SERVANT

Where's Potpan? He's not helping us take the plates away. He carries a wooden platter! He scrapes a wooden plate!

SECOND SERVANT

When household manners rest in the hands of only one or two people—and their hands dirty at that—it's disgusting.

FIRST SERVANT

Take these folding stools away, remove the sideboard, watch the silverware. Save me a piece of marzipan, and if you're really a friend, tell the doorman to let in Susan Grindstone and Nell (for our own party). Antony and Potpan! 5

SECOND SERVANT

Yes, boy, get ready.

The THIRD SERVANT enters.

FIRST SERVANT (to THIRD SERVANT)

We've looked for you, called for you, and searched for you in the dance hall. 10

THIRD SERVANT

We can't be here and there, too. Be cheerful, boys, and be quick. To the one who lives longest go the spoils!

They exit.

CAPULET enters with JULIET, TYBALT, and others of his house to greet the guests, ROMEO, and others in disguise.

CAPULET

Welcome, gentlemen! Those ladies who don't have corns on their toes will dance with you. 15

Ah, dear ladies, which of you will now refuse to dance? If you hesitate, I'll swear you have corns. Did any of you think that joke hit home? Welcome, gentlemen! I remember the time when I too wore a mask and 20

A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
Such as would please; 'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.
You are welcome, gentlemen! Come, musicians, play.

[*Music plays, and they dance.*]

25 A hall, a hall! Give room! And foot it, girls.
More light, you knaves; and turn the tables up,
And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.
Ah, sirrah,* this unlook'd-for sport comes well.*
Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet,
For you and I are past our dancing days.
30 How long is't now since last yourself and I
Were in a mask?

2. CAPULET

By'r lady, thirty years.

CAPULET

What, man! 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much.
'Tis since the **nuptial** of Lucentio,
35 Come Pentecost as quickly as it will,
Some five and twenty years; and then we mask'd.

2. CAPULET

'Tis more, 'tis more. His son is elder, sir;
His son is thirty.

CAPULET

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

ROMEO

[*to a SERVING-MAN*]

What lady's that which doth enrich the hand
Of yonder knight?

SERVANT

I know not, sir.

27 *sirrah* a term used to address someone socially or (as an intentional put-down) mentally inferior

27 *unlook'd . . . well* In Shakespeare's day, party hosts considered themselves honored when uninvited guests appeared.



whispered sweet nothings in a beautiful lady's ear
to please her. That's all in the past now, long gone!
You are welcome, gentlemen! Come, musicians, play.

Music plays and they dance.

Clear the hall! Make room! Dance, girls!
Give us more light, you rascals, and get the tables out of 25
the way.

Put out the fire—the room has grown too hot.
Ah, sir, these party-crashers are welcome.
No, sit down, my good relative Capulet,
for you and I are past our dancing days.
How long has it been since you and I 30
wore a mask?

SECOND CAPULET

I swear, it's been thirty years.

CAPULET

What, it can't be that long, not that long!
It was last at the wedding of Lucentio,
around Pentecost, whenever that comes, 35
some twenty-five years ago that we wore masks.

SECOND CAPULET

No, longer, it was longer ago than that! Lucentio's son is older, sir.
His son is thirty.

CAPULET

How can you say that?
His son was still a minor just two years ago. 40

ROMEO (to SERVANT)

Who is the lady who graces the hand
of that gentleman over there?

SERVANT

I don't know, sir.



ROMEO

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
45 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
50 The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

TYBALT

This, by his voice, should be a Montague.
55 Fetch me my rapier, boy. What dares the slave
Come hither, cover'd with an antic face,
To fleer and scorn at our solemnity?
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

CAPULET

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

TYBALT

Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,
A villain that is hither come in spite
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

CAPULET

Young Romeo is it?

TYBALT

65 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

CAPULET

Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone,
'A bears him like a portly gentleman;
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth.
70 I would not for the wealth of all this town
Here in my house do him **disparagement**;
Therefore be patient, take no note of him;
It is my will, the which if thou respect,



ROMEO

Oh, she teaches the torches to burn brightly!
She hangs upon the face of night 45
like a rich jewel in an Ethiopian's ear—
her beauty is too rich to be touched, too heavenly for this earth!
She looks like a snow-white dove dancing among crows,
she is so much more beautiful than the other ladies.
When this dance is over, I'll see where she stands, 50
and I'll make my coarse hand blessed by touching her hand.
Did I ever love anyone before now? My eyes will swear
that I never saw real beauty until tonight.

TYBALT (*overhearing* ROMEO)

That man has the voice of a Montague.
Get me my sword, boy. How dare this lowlife 55
come here, disguised by a comic mask,
to mock and scorn our banquet?
Now by my family's good name and reputation,
I wouldn't hold it a sin to kill him.

CAPULET

What's wrong, nephew? Why are you so angry? 60

TYBALT

Uncle, that man is a Montague, our enemy.
He's a villain who has come in hatred
to mock our banquet tonight.

CAPULET

That is young Romeo, isn't it?

TYBALT

Yes, it is the villain Romeo. 65

CAPULET

Calm down, gentle nephew, leave him alone.
He carries himself like a dignified gentleman,
and to tell the truth, Verona's citizens say
that he is a good, well-mannered youth.
I would not for all the riches in this town 70
harm him here in my house.
Be patient and pay no attention to him.
Those are my wishes, which if you'll respect,

75 Show a fair presence and put off these frowns,
An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

TYBALT

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

CAPULET

He shall be endur'd.
What, goodman boy! I say he shall; go to!
80 Am I the master here, or you? Go to!
You'll not endure him! God shall mend my soul!
You'll make a mutiny among my guests!
You will set cock-a-hoop! You'll be the man!

TYBALT

Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

CAPULET

85 Go to, go to;
You are a saucy boy. Is't so, indeed?
This trick may chance to scathe you; I know what.
You must contrary me! Marry, 'tis time.—
Well said, my hearts!—You are a princox; go;
90 Be quiet, or—More light, more light!—for shame!
I'll make you quiet.—What, cheerly, my hearts!

TYBALT

Patience perforce with wilful choler meeting
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall
95 Now seeming sweet convert to bitt'rest gall.

[Exit.]

ROMEO

[to Juliet] If I **profane** with my unworthiest hand
This holy shrine,* the gentle fine is this:

98 *holy shrine* Romeo is referring to Juliet. Some scholars think Romeo is disguised as a pilgrim.



you'll put on a cheery face and stop frowning.
Your frowns aren't proper at a feast.

75

TYBALT

My frowns are fitting when you have a villain for a guest.
I will not tolerate his presence.

CAPULET

You will tolerate him!
What do you mean, boy? I say he shall stay! Be off!
Am I the master here, or are you? Be off!
You'll not stand him? By heaven!
You'll disturb the guests!
You'll bring about a riot! You'll play the big hero!

80

TYBALT

Uncle, this is a disgrace to us.

CAPULET

Enough, enough!
You're a rude boy, aren't you? So this is the way it is?
This suggestion of yours may just hurt you. I know what's behind
this.
You are compelled to contradict me. I swear it's time—
(*to the DANCERS*) Well done, friends.—(*to*
TYBALT) You are impertinent—Go away!
Be quiet, or—(*to SERVANTS*) More light, give us
more light! (*to TYBALT*) Shame on you!
I'll shut you up.—(*to DANCERS*) Have fun, friends.

85

90

TYBALT

The clash of forced self-control when it meets with anger
makes me shake from the different emotions.
I'll leave, but Romeo's intrusion,
which now seems sweet, will be bitterly regretted.

95

ROMEO (*to JULIET*)

If I abuse with my unworthy hand
your holy shrine, here's the fine I'll pay:



My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

100 Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET

105 Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO

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

[kissing her]

JULIET

Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO

Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urg'd!
Give me my sin again.

[kissing her again]

JULIET

You kiss by the book.

NURSE

115 Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

ROMEO

What is her mother?



that my lips, like two blushing pilgrims, stand ready
to smooth away my rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

Good pilgrim, your hands are not rough as you say. 100
The touch of your hand is sufficient devotion.
Even saints greet pilgrims by touching hands,
and holding hands is the pilgrim's greeting.

ROMEO

Don't saints have lips, and religious pilgrims, too?

JULIET

Yes, pilgrim. They have lips which they use to pray. 105

ROMEO

Oh, then, dear saint, let lips touch as hands do.
Lips pray, you know, so faith won't turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not usually take action, though they may grant favors
prayed for.

ROMEO

Then don't move while I receive what I prayed for.
My lips, by yours, will be cleansed of sin. 110

He kisses her.

JULIET

Now my lips have taken on your sin.

ROMEO

Sin from my lips? That is a sin that is sweetly suggested.
Give me my sin again.

He kisses her again.

JULIET

You kiss as though you researched the subject.

NURSE

Madam, your mother wants to speak with you. 81

ROMEO

Who is her mother?

NURSE

Marry, bachelor,
Her mother is the lady of the house,
And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous.
120 I nurs'd her daughter, that you talk'd withal;
I tell you, he that can lay hold of her
Shall have the chinks.

ROMEO

Is she a Capulet?
O dear account! My life is my foe's debt.

BENVOLIO

125 Away, be gone; the sport is at the best.

ROMEO

Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

CAPULET

Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone;
We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.
Is it e'en so? Why, then, I thank you all;
130 I thank you, honest gentlemen; good-night.
More torches here! Come on then, let's to bed.
Ah, sirrah, by my fay, it waxes late;
I'll to my rest.

[*All but JULIET and NURSE begin to go out.*]

JULIET

Come hither, Nurse. What is yond gentleman?

NURSE

135 The son and heir of old Tiberio.

JULIET

What's he that now is going out of door?

NURSE

Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.

JULIET

What's he that follows here, that would
not dance?



NURSE

Why, bachelor,
her mother is the lady of this house.
And she is a good lady, as well as being wise and virtuous.
I nursed her daughter with whom you spoke. 120
I tell you, the man who can marry her
will have a lot of money.

ROMEO

Is she a Capulet?
What a costly account! My life is at the mercy of my enemy.

BENVOLIO

Let's go. The party is over. 125

ROMEO

Yes, I'm afraid so; I am worried.

CAPULET

No, gentlemen, don't go.
There's still a modest feast to come.
(They whisper in his ear.) Is that so? Well then, thank you.
Thanks to all of you honest gentlemen. Good night. 130
Bring more torches here! (Maskers leave.) Come on then,
let's go to bed.
Ah, sir, by my faith, it's late.
I'll go to bed.

All but JULIET and the NURSE leave.

JULIET

Come here, nurse. Who is that gentleman?

NURSE

The son and heir of old Tiberio. 135

JULIET

Who is that going out the door now?

NURSE

Indeed, I think that's young Petruchio.

JULIET

Who is the one who is following behind—the one who
would not dance?



NURSE

I know not.

JULIET

140 Go, ask his name.—If he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding-bed.

NURSE

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

JULIET

145 My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Prodigious birth of love it is to me
That I must love a loathed enemy.

NURSE

What's this? What's this?

JULIET

150 Of one I danc'd withal. A rhyme I learn'd even now
[One calls within, "Juliet."]

NURSE

Anon, anon!
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.
[Exeunt.]



NURSE

I don't know.

JULIET

Go and ask what his name is. (*to herself*) If he is married, 140
my grave will probably be my wedding bed.

NURSE (*leaves and then returns*)

His name is Romeo, Romeo Montague.
He's the only son of your great enemy.

JULIET

My only love springs from my only hate!
I saw him too early when I didn't know him, and now I 145
realize who he is too late!
This is a horrible beginning to love
that I must love a hated enemy.

NURSE

What is this? What are you saying?

JULIET

A rhyme I just learned from someone
I just danced with. 150

Someone calls Juliet's name from offstage.

NURSE

We're coming!
Come, let's go; the strangers are all gone.

They exit.



Act I Review

Discussion Questions

1. What does the first scene of the play reveal about Romeo's behavior? Explain how he changes by the end of Act I.
2. What is your impression of Juliet's father? Describe the relationship between Capulet and his daughter as it is shown during Scene ii.
3. What concepts of love are presented by the female characters in Scene iii?
4. Characterize Mercutio as he appears in Scene iv. What kind of friend is he to Romeo?
5. What do you learn about Tybalt in Scene v?
6. Analyze the behavior of Tybalt, Mercutio, and Benvolio in Act I. Based on your analysis, predict what their roles might be in the rest of the play.
7. Compare Romeo's reaction to Juliet's when each discovers the true identity of the other.
8. Do Romeo's feelings for Juliet seem to be different from his feelings for Rosaline? Explain your answer.

Literary Elements

1. A **foil** is a character who has qualities that are in sharp contrast to another character, thus emphasizing the traits of each. How is Mercutio a foil to Romeo?
2. **Foreshadowing** refers to hints in the text about what will occur later. What examples of foreshadowing do you find in the Prologue and in Scene iv of Act I?

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3. **Hyperbole** means obvious exaggeration. Look at Romeo's declaration of love for Rosaline in Act I, Scene i. What examples can you find of hyperbole? Discuss why you think he overstates his feelings.
 4. A **pun** is a play on words that have similar sounds but more than one possible spelling or meaning. Scene iv, in which Romeo and his friends banter on the way to the Capulets' masquerade party, is filled with puns. Find a pun in this scene and explain its different meanings and effect.
 5. Good drama has **conflict**: struggle between opposing forces. What conflicts are set in motion by events in Scene v?

Writing Prompts

1. Look up the rules for the 14-line form of verse known as a sonnet. Using the rhyme scheme of your choice, write a sonnet of romantic love. Or you may want to write a sonnet that parodies or satirizes the form.
2. Write a description of Romeo based on what you have learned about him so far. Use specific quotes from the play to support your writing.
3. Assume that you write an advice column for a newspaper or magazine. A modern-day Romeo or Juliet writes to you asking for your advice. He or she explains what happened at the party and also mentions the family feud. First write his or her letter, and then write your response.
4. Choose a scene and write a brief summary of its events in one sentence. You may choose to write it in standard English, contemporary slang or street talk, or the language of Shakespeare, Elizabethan English. Or write three summaries; use a separate style in each.
5. Choose a quotation from one of the scenes in Act I that you feel best characterizes that scene. In a paragraph, discuss why you think this quotation is significant and effective at conveying the events or emotions of this scene.