

RSC

**ROMEO
AND
JULIET**



**William
Shakespeare**

**Edited by Jonathan Bate
and Eric Rasmussen**



The RSC Shakespeare

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Romeo and Juliet

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William Shakespeare

**ROMEO
AND JULIET**

Edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen

Introduction by Jonathan Bate



The Modern Library
New York

2009 Modern Library Paperback Edition

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The version of *Romeo and Juliet* and the corresponding footnotes that appear in this volume were originally published in *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, published in 2007 by Modern Library, an imprint of The Random House Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc.

eISBN: 978-1-58836-841-6

www.modernlibrary.com

v3.1

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INTRODUCTION

“A PAIR OF STAR-CROSSED LOVERS”

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare invented the idea of the teenager in love. Many of his characters—the thin and anguished Hamlet, the fat and jolly Falstaff, the sexy Cleopatra, the aged King Lear—have associations even for people who have never seen or read his plays, but none more so than Romeo and Juliet. All around the world, the pairing of the names is synonymous with the idea of being young and in love. “Juliet’s balcony” has long been a tourist destination in Verona, even though she is a fictional character and there is no balcony in Shakespeare’s play (in the original text she appears at her “window”; it was only in the theater of David Garrick a century and a half after the play was written that the balcony was introduced as part of the set design). Innumerable allusions in popular culture and song attest to the couple’s status as archetypes of young love—“We were both young when I first saw you ... I’m standing there / On a balcony in summer air” (Taylor Swift, “Love Story”). When this song was performed at the 2008 Country Music Awards it was accompanied by couples in eighteenth-century costume re-enacting the ball from *Romeo and Juliet*, including the sequence in which the lovers link hands. At the end of the song a handsome Romeo in breeches appeared beside Ms. Swift, the answer to every teenage girl’s dream.

“The process or condition of growing up; the growing age of human beings; the period which extends from childhood to manhood or womanhood; youth; ordinarily considered as extending from 14 to 25 in males, and from 12 to 21 in females.” Thus the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition of “adolescence.” Around the beginning of the Second World War, the new word “teenager” was coined for this phase of human life, but the idea that there was a distinct period between childhood and adulthood has a long history.

In ancient Greece, Aristotle divided life into youth, middle age, and old age. In ancient Rome, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* included a sustained comparison between the four seasons and the passage of human life under the auspices of Time, the devourer of all things. In early Christianity, St. Chrysostom developed a six-fold division: infant, child, adolescent, young man, man of gravitas, old man. He suggested that each age had its own particular earthly miseries. Later writers, anticipating the famous speech by Jaques in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, added one further age of man (decrepitude, extreme old age, or “second childhood”). The elegance of the “seven ages” was their correspondence to the quasi-magical properties of the number seven. God may have created everything in six days, but there was also the seventh day on which he rested. Both biblical and classical

writers often ordered things in sevens, as with Jacob's prediction to Pharaoh of seven fat years, then seven lean ones. It was therefore widely believed that human life went in seven-year cycles.

Sixteenth-century writers typically proposed the following pattern: the first age is infancy (from Latin *infans*, meaning "unable to speak"), then comes childhood, which lasts to the age of seven, then youth, which lasts till fourteen, then adolescence, lasting from fourteen to twenty-eight and characterized as the reign of "concupiscence," which meant bodily and especially sexual appetite. Then comes virility or "man's estate," which continues until the completion of the forty-ninth year. Old age sets in at fifty and lasts until death, if you are a believer in the six ages, or until decrepitude, if you prefer seven.

Consider the Old Shepherd's entrance line in *The Winter's Tale*: "I would there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest, for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancients, stealing, fighting." This suggests that Shakespeare, like many of his contemporaries, lumped together "youth" and "adolescence" into a single age of sexual indulgence, riot and high spirits, lasting fourteen years. This is where he locates Romeo and Juliet, along with the other young male blades in the play. Juliet, crucially, is on the threshold of her fourteenth birthday. Romeo's age is not specified but he has clearly not reached that stage in the mid-twenties when a young male matures fully into "man's estate."

Tragedy is traditionally focused on the undoing of heroes of extreme masculinity or on powerful rulers who climb to the top of Fortune's wheel, then tumble to catastrophe. There was a long tradition of poetry about doomed lovers, but to make a pair of adolescents into tragic heroes in a stage play was an extraordinary innovation on Shakespeare's part.

"THE FEARFUL PASSAGE OF THEIR DEATH-MARKED LOVE"

The Irish poet W. B. Yeats remarked in a letter that only two subjects can be of any lasting interest to a serious and studious mind: sex and the dead. He was not thinking about *Romeo and Juliet* at the time, but the play is both seriously and playfully interested in the connection between the drive whose end is the creation of new life and the confrontation that ends in the extinction of life. The same ardent, youthful energy that impels Romeo to Juliet's bed leads him to fight with hot-blooded Tybalt. Death is the consequence of both the rivalry between the male gangs and the sexual attraction between Juliet and Romeo.

The play contains some of Shakespeare's most beautiful poetry, including such well-loved lines as "a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet" and "But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks? / It is the east, and Juliet is the sun." Yet it also contains some of his most raucous bawdy wordplay. Seconds before Romeo identifies Juliet with the rising sun, Mercutio makes a baser comparison: "O, that she were / An open arse and thou a pop'rin pear!" The

image depends on the resemblance of the fruit known as a medlar to the female genitals and the Poperinghe species of pear to those of the male. Mercutio's ribbing of Romeo also puns on "to meddle" and "pop it in," both meaning to have sex, and on "O" as a sign of the vagina. The juxtaposition of such matter to Romeo's glorious aria on the transformative effect of love at first sight is typical of Shakespeare's unsentimental robustness. Youthful as the lovers are, Juliet especially, this is a very grown-up play, which recognizes that love and sex are inseparable.

The verbal sparring between Romeo and Mercutio at the beginning of Act 2 scene 3 repays close attention. Mercutio begins by mocking "the numbers that Petrarch flowed in," that is to say the idealizing language of courtly poetry in the sonneting tradition of the Italian Renaissance master Petrarch writing in praise of his Laura. As the banter unfolds, it becomes more and more obscene. Love poetry is said to be "drivelling." A lover may use spiritual language, but his purpose is distinctly bodily: "to hide his bauble in a hole." "Stop there, stop there," replies Romeo, as if playing the part of the censor outraged at the explicitness of the sexual reference. But Mercutio is on a roll: "Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair." As so often with Shakespeare, multiple puns are at work: "tale" plays on "tail," a slang term for the male sex organ, while "against the hair" is both a phrase meaning "against my wish" and an allusion to pubic hair. The exchange continues with further puns on erection and flaccidity, "whole" and a woman's "hole," "occupy" as slang for having sex and "gear" as sexual equipment.

Shakespeare is rigorously honest about the paradox of being in love and making love. The same experience is both intensely spiritual and unashamedly down and dirty. The language of the play is often profane, but just as frequently it is sacred. Petrarchan love poetry is parodied, especially by Mercutio, but it is also gloriously indulged in, even woven into the dramatic action by means of the interlocking lines, hands and lips of Romeo and Juliet at the ball. The following sequence, which imitates Petrarch in treating love as a quasi-religious phenomenon, is actually written as a sonnet shared between the two characters:

ROMEO If I profane with my unworhiest hand

This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:

My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand

To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET 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 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.

And as the sonnet is consummated in the rhyming couplet, he kisses her.

Romeo himself has some rapid growing up to do along the way. At the beginning of the play, he is in love with Rosaline. Or rather, he is in love with the idea of being in love. We never actually see Rosaline: she exists solely as the idealized love object of Romeo. She is nothing more than a literary type, the beautiful but unavailable mistress of the sonnet tradition that goes back to Petrarch. The Petrarchan lover thrives on artifice and paradox. The fire in his heart is dependent on his lady's icy maidenhood—"Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health, / Still-waking sleep that is not what it is!" As the Friar recognizes, this is mere "doting," not true loving. And so long as Mercutio is around, the bubble of poetic language keeps on being pricked—is it not just a matter of rhyming "love" with "dove"?

Romeo still poeticizes on seeing Juliet, though he speaks in richly textured imagery instead of the banal oxymorons inspired by Rosaline: "It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night / As a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear." Romeo and Juliet weave their sonnet when they meet at the Capulet ball, but over the next few scenes their language evolves into something more fluid and more natural. You can hear Shakespeare growing as a poet even as you see the love between Juliet and Romeo growing from infatuation at first sight to the conviction that each has found the other's soul mate. Love is a chemistry that begins from a physiological transformation—Romeo is "bewitchèd by the charm of looks"—but it becomes a discovery of the very core of a human being: "Can I go forward when my heart is here? / Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out."

"THESE VIOLENT DELIGHTS HAVE VIOLENT ENDS"

Shakespeare often thought in pairs. Give him an idea and he is equally interested in its opposite. Sometimes he will handle similar material in successive works, trying it out as comedy in one case and tragedy in the other. In 1593–94, the theaters were closed due to a severe outbreak of plague in London. During this time, Shakespeare wrote a pair of narrative poems on the subject of erotic desire: the playful *Venus and Adonis* and the mournful *Rape of Lucrece*. Both were based on stories by the Roman poet Ovid, Shakespeare's prime precursor in the art of quick changes and sudden contradictions.

Within a year or so of the theaters reopening, he wrote his most Ovidian play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that wonder-filled anatomy of love in which “quick bright things come to confusion” and “everything seems double,” until out of dream and illusion there grows “something of great constancy.” *Dream* turns on comedy’s ancient plot of young people finding true love in the face of parental opposition. In the final act, the opposite ending of the same story is invoked: Bottom and his friends perform Ovid’s story of Pyramus and Thisbe, a pair of lovers from rival households who lose their lives in a tragedy of bad timing and misapprehension. Though played in the style of parody, the “very tragical mirth” of Pyramus and Thisbe is a reminder that, in the matter of love, all does not necessarily end well.

So it is that, like *Venus and Lucrece*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet* are companion pieces. As *Dream* is a comedy darkened by something of the night, so *Romeo* is a tragedy that keeps surprising us with flashes of comedy. The shock of Juliet’s apparent death is heightened by proximity to the cheerful bustle of the wedding preparations and the comic dialogue of Clown and Musicians. Equally, Shakespeare takes character types from the comic tradition—the tyrannical father, the bawdy servant, the meddling friar, the witty and cynical friend—and transforms them into such complex, many-layered beings as Old Capulet, the Nurse, and Mercutio.

The spirit of the play is fundamentally Ovidian, although the story is closely based on a different source, an Italian Renaissance novella that was mediated to Shakespeare via a drearily written poem called *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet*. As in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, “violent delights have violent ends”: intense passions lead to dramatic transformations, the bright flame of young love is swiftly and cruelly snuffed out, but something of constancy endures at the close. Ovid’s Pyramus and Thisbe meet by an ancient tomb outside the city. They fall to earth in death, but their love is symbolically remembered in the ripening of the blood-dark mulberry. A couplet of Friar Laurence’s neatly sums up the structure of feeling that underlies this and so many other of Ovid’s transformations: “The earth that’s nature’s mother is her tomb: / What is her burying grave, that is her womb.” Taken as a whole, the Friar’s soliloquy cuts to the quick of Shakespeare’s double vision. It is structured around the rhetorical figure of oxymoron, the paradox whereby opposites are held together. Not only womb and tomb, but also day and night, herbs and flowers that are simultaneously poisonous and medicinal, virtue and vice, God’s grace and our own desires: “such opposèd kings encamp them still / In man as well as herbs.”

In Peter Quince’s staging of Pyramus and Thisbe, Snout memorably plays the part of the Wall that divides the households of the two lovers. *Romeo and Juliet* begins with Sampson, a servant of the house of Capulet, bragging of how he will thrust the Montague maids up against a wall. That is to say, having beaten up the rival men, he will have their women: sex is a matter of taking, not giving. Sampson boasts the biblical name of a man capable of bringing walls tumbling

down, but what actually happens is that Romeo lightly o'erleaps the orchard wall—like Ovid's Hercules entering the fabulous gardens of the Hesperides—and moves the action into a new key. The lovers give themselves to each other and, though they are then taken in death, the wall of division crumbles away. The memory of Romeo and Juliet binds together the houses of Montague and Capulet, drawing a line under their ancient grudge.

The great Romantic critic and essayist William Hazlitt read Shakespeare as profoundly as he meditated upon love. "Romeo is Hamlet in love," he said. For Hazlitt, falling in love is like coming home to your dreams: "We have never before seen anything to come up to our newly discovered goddess, but she is what we have been all our lives looking for. The idol we fall down before and worship is an image familiar to our minds. It has been present to our waking thoughts, it has haunted us in our dreams." But what also haunts the lover—remember the teasing paradoxes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—is the suspicion that it might all be a dream. Mercutio spins a tale of how love is but the mischief of Queen Mab, midwife of illusion. Romeo blesses the night, but then acknowledges his fear that "Being in night, all this is but a dream, / Too flattering-sweet to be substantial."

Juliet has to deal with another fear. For a girl in Shakespeare's time, chastity was a priceless commodity. To lose her virtue without the prospect of marriage would be to lose herself. In the speech that begins "Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face," Juliet reveals quite remarkable self-understanding. She is acutely aware that in love the stakes for a woman are far higher than they are for a man. Here Shakespeare's poetic language becomes the vehicle of both argument and emotion. The artifice of rhyme is replaced by blank verse that moves with the suppleness of thought itself.

In the original production, the lines would have been spoken by a young male actor of perhaps around the same thirteen years of age as the character of Juliet. By highlighting extreme youthfulness (in the source, Juliet is sixteen), Shakespeare makes a bold implicit claim for his poetic drama. Both actor and character are speaking with maturity far beyond their years: such, the dramatist implies, is the metamorphic potency of the mingled fire and powder of love and art. Though younger than Romeo, Juliet is more knowing. She senses the danger in his talk of idolatry. In the soaring love duet that is their final scene together before Romeo's exile, she wills the song to be that of the nightingale rather than the lark because she knows that the break of day will mean the end of their night of love and the dawn of a harsh reality in which she will be reduced to the status of a bargaining chip in the negotiations between Verona's powerful families.

According to the social code of the time, it was the duty of the young to obey the old. Marriage was a matter not of love, but of the consolidation and perpetuation of wealth and status. Arthur Brooke, author of the *Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* which Shakespeare had before him as he wrote, told his

readers that the moral of the story was that young lovers who submit to erotic desire, neglecting the authority and advice of parents and listening instead to drunken gossips and superstitious friars, will come to a deservedly sticky end. Shakespeare's play, by contrast, glories in the energy of youth. It does not seek to advance a moral or to condemn what Juliet calls the "disobedient opposition" of child to parent. The drama offers instead the tragic paradox that the heat in the blood that animates the star-crossed lovers is the same ardor that leads young men to scrap in the street and to kill out of loyalty to their friends. The kinship of love and revenge, the perpetual war between the generations: Shakespeare was to return to this territory in later plays such as *Hamlet* and *King Lear*.

It is sometimes said that *Romeo and Juliet* is a lesser work than these "mature" tragedies because its catastrophe is provoked by fate rather than the actions of the characters themselves. Shakespeare does impose an artistic shape upon the plot through the device of the Chorus, with its emphasis on events being written in the stars. But the misadventure that provokes the disastrous ending is not merely a piece of bad luck: the reason Romeo does not get Friar Laurence's crucial letter is that Friar John is detained for fear that he might have been infected with plague. Plague was an everyday reality in Shakespeare's London. Puritan preachers may have proclaimed it as a judgment sent by an angry God, but that is not how it would have seemed to Shakespeare's original audience. Everybody in the theater would have known families whose future had been blighted by plague.

Parents are supposed to die before their children, the old before the young. With plague, it is not always like that. The tragic irony of *Romeo and Juliet* is that the houses of both Capulet and Montague escape the plague, yet still the children die first. The final scene takes place in an ancestral tomb, but those who lie dead are the flower of a city's youth—Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Juliet and her Romeo.

ABOUT THE TEXT

Shakespeare endures through history. He illuminates later times as well as his own. He helps us to understand the human condition. But he cannot do this without a good text of the plays. Without editions there would be no Shakespeare. That is why every twenty years or so throughout the last three centuries there has been a major new edition of his complete works. One aspect of editing is the process of keeping the texts up-to-date—modernizing the spelling, punctuation, and typography (though not, of course, the actual words), providing explanatory notes in the light of changing educational practices (a generation ago, most of Shakespeare’s classical and biblical allusions could be assumed to be generally understood, but now they can’t).

But because Shakespeare did not personally oversee the publication of his plays, editors also have to make decisions about the relative authority of the early printed editions. Half of the sum of his plays only appeared posthumously, in the elaborately produced First Folio text of 1623, the original “Complete Works” prepared for the press by Shakespeare’s fellow actors, the people who knew the plays better than anyone else. The other half had appeared in print in his lifetime, in the more compact and cheaper form of “Quarto” editions, some of which reproduced good-quality texts, others of which were to a greater or lesser degree garbled and error-strewn. In the case of a few plays there are hundreds of differences between the Quarto and Folio editions, some of them far from trivial.

If you look at printers’ handbooks from the age of Shakespeare, you quickly discover that one of the first rules was that, whenever possible, compositors were recommended to set their type from existing printed books rather than manuscripts. This was the age before mechanical typesetting, where each individual letter had to be picked out by hand from the compositor’s case and placed on a stick (upside down and back to front) before being laid on the press. It was an age of murky rushlight and of manuscripts written in a secretary hand that had dozens of different, hard-to-decipher forms. Printers’ lives were a lot easier when they were reprinting existing books rather than struggling with handwritten copy. Easily the quickest way to have created the First Folio would have been simply to reprint those eighteen plays that had already appeared in Quarto and only work from manuscript on the other eighteen.

But that is not what happened. Whenever Quartos were used, playhouse “promptbooks” were also consulted and stage directions copied in from them. And in the case of several major plays where a reasonably well-printed Quarto was available, the Folio printers were instructed to work from an alternative, playhouse-derived manuscript. This meant that the whole process of producing

the first complete Shakespeare took months, even years, longer than it might have done. But for the men overseeing the project, John Hemings and Henry Condell, friends and fellow actors who had been remembered in Shakespeare's will, the additional labor and cost were worth the effort for the sake of producing an edition that was close to the practice of the theater. They wanted all the plays in print so that people could, as they wrote in their prefatory address to the reader, "read him and again and again," but they also wanted "the great variety of readers" to work from texts that were close to the theater life for which Shakespeare originally intended them. For this reason, the *RSC Shakespeare*, in both *Complete Works* and individual volumes, uses the Folio as base text wherever possible. Significant Quarto variants are, however, noted in the Textual Notes.

Romeo and Juliet is one of the plays where the Folio text was printed from a Quarto, though with reference to a playhouse manuscript, which provided some additional stage directions. Most modern editors use the Second Quarto as their copy text, but import stage directions, act divisions and some corrections from Folio. Our Folio-led editorial practice follows the reverse procedure, using Folio as copy text, but deploying the Second Quarto as a "control text" that offers assistance in the correction and identification of compositors' errors in the Folio, of which there are many (as a result of large parts of this play having been set in type by the least experienced of the Folio compositors).

The 1622 Fourth Quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* was based on the 1609 Third Quarto, but a printing house editor consulted the (very different, often defective, but sometimes illuminating) 1597 First Quarto and, as a result, introduced a number of highly intelligent corrections and emendations. This fact makes us question the usual editorial assumption that earlier texts are to be preferred to later ones. The traditional notion of fidelity to Shakespeare's first Quartos (or first good-quality Quartos), on the grounds that they represent the texts closest to "what the author wrote," is sometimes more an ideal than a reality. Early Quartos have errors too. And later Quartos made good corrections as well as introducing new errors. In the case of *Romeo and Juliet*, modern editors say that they are editing the Second Quarto (the first good-quality Quarto), but since there are many errors in the Second Quarto and since the Fourth Quarto makes excellent corrections and conjectural emendations in the face of those errors (partly by means of judicious use of the "bad" or "short" or "copied by the ear" First Quarto), the reality of modern editions of *Romeo and Juliet* is that they are closer to the Fourth than the Second Quarto. Folio *Romeo and Juliet* was printed from a marked-up copy of the Third Quarto, often corrected similarly to the Fourth Quarto's correction of the Second. If supposedly Second Quarto-derived editions are actually closer to the Fourth Quarto and Folio is also close to the Fourth Quarto, though independent from it, then there need be no intrinsic objection to our beginning from Folio, though restoring Second (and occasionally First) Quarto readings where Folio is manifestly in error. The lesson of textual transmission is the same as that of the theater: the Shakespearean text was

mobile in its own time and remains ever mobile. Each time one of the plays is performed, whatever the “copy text,” the words will be slightly different, thanks to the tricks of actors’ memories. So, too, each time the play is edited, there will be dozens of differences of punctuation, emendation and interpretation. Textual mobility is an essential part of Shakespeare’s evolving creative afterlife.

The following notes highlight various aspects of the editorial process and indicate conventions used in the text of this edition:

Lists of Parts are supplied in the First Folio for only six plays, not including *Romeo and Juliet*, so the list here is editorially supplied. Capitals indicate that part of the name which is used for speech headings in the script (thus “MONTAGUE, Romeo’s father”).

Locations are provided by the Folio for only two plays. Eighteenth-century editors, working in an age of elaborately realistic stage sets, were the first to provide detailed locations. Given that Shakespeare wrote for a bare stage and often imprecise sense of place, we have relegated locations to the explanatory notes, where they are given at the beginning of each scene where the imaginary location is different from the one before. The whole of *Romeo and Juliet* takes place in locations in and around Verona, a city in Veneto in northern Italy, with the exception of Act 5 Scene 1, which is located in Mantua, the capital of nearby Lombardy, to which Romeo has been exiled.

Act and Scene Divisions were provided in the Folio in a much more thoroughgoing way than in the Quartos. Sometimes, however, they were erroneous or omitted; corrections and additions supplied by editorial tradition are indicated by square brackets. Five-act division is based on a classical model, and act breaks provided the opportunity to replace the candles in the indoor Blackfriars playhouse which the King’s Men used after 1608, but Shakespeare did not necessarily think in terms of a five-part structure of dramatic composition. The Folio convention is that a scene ends when the stage is empty. Nowadays, partly under the influence of film, we tend to consider a scene to be a dramatic unit that ends with either a change of imaginary location or a significant passage of time within the narrative. Shakespeare’s fluidity of composition accords well with this convention, so in addition to act and scene numbers we provide a *running scene* count in the right margin at the beginning of each new scene, in the typeface used for editorial directions. Where there is a scene break caused by a momentary bare stage, but the location does not change and extra time does not pass, we use the convention *running scene continues*. There is inevitably a degree of editorial judgment in making such calls, but the system is very valuable in suggesting the pace of the plays.

Speakers’ Names are often inconsistent in Folio. We have regularized speech headings, but retained an element of deliberate inconsistency in entry directions, in order to give the flavor of Folio.

Verse is indicated by lines that do not run to the right margin and by capitalization of each line. The Folio printers sometimes set verse as prose, and vice versa (either out of misunderstanding or for reasons of space). We have silently corrected in such cases, although in some instances there is ambiguity, in which case we have leaned toward the preservation of Folio layout. Folio sometimes uses contraction (“turnd” rather than “turned”) to indicate whether or not the final “-ed” of a past participle is sounded, an area where there is variation for the sake of the five-beat iambic pentameter rhythm. We use the convention of a grave accent to indicate sounding (thus “turnèd” would be two syllables), but would urge actors not to overstress. In cases where one speaker ends with a verse half-line and the next begins with the other half of the pentameter, editors since the late eighteenth century have indented the second line. We have abandoned this convention, since the Folio does not use it, and nor did actors’ cues in the Shakespearean theater. An exception is made when the second speaker actively interrupts or completes the first speaker’s sentence.

Spelling is modernized, but older forms are occasionally maintained where necessary for rhythm or aural effect.

Punctuation in Shakespeare’s time was as much rhetorical as grammatical. “Colon” was originally a term for a unit of thought in an argument. The semicolon was a new unit of punctuation (some of the Quartos lack them altogether). We have modernized punctuation throughout, but have given more weight to Folio punctuation than many editors, since, though not Shakespearean, it reflects the usage of his period. In particular, we have used the colon far more than many editors: it is exceptionally useful as a way of indicating how many Shakespearean speeches unfold clause by clause in a developing argument that gives the illusion of enacting the process of thinking in the moment. We have also kept in mind the origin of punctuation in classical times as a way of assisting the actor and orator: the comma suggests the briefest of pauses for breath, the colon a middling one and a full stop or period a longer pause. Semicolons, by contrast, belong to an era of punctuation that was only just coming in during Shakespeare’s time and that is coming to an end now: we have accordingly only used them where they occur in our copy texts (and not always then). Dashes are sometimes used for parenthetical interjections where the Folio has brackets. They are also used for interruptions and changes in train of thought. Where a change of addressee occurs within a speech, we have used a dash preceded by a full stop (or occasionally another form of punctuation). Often the identity of the respective addressees is obvious from the context. When it is not, this has been indicated in a marginal stage direction.

Entrances and Exits are fairly thorough in Folio, which has accordingly been followed as faithfully as possible. Where characters are omitted or corrections are necessary, this is indicated by square brackets (e.g. “[and *Attendants*]”). *Exit* is sometimes silently normalized to *Exeunt* and *Manet* anglicized to “remains.” We trust Folio positioning of entrances and exits to a greater degree than most

editors.

Editorial Stage Directions such as stage business, asides, indications of addressee and of characters' position on the gallery stage are only used sparingly in Folio. Other editions mingle directions of this kind with original Folio and Quarto directions, sometimes marking them by means of square brackets. We have sought to distinguish what could be described as *directorial* interventions of this kind from Folio-style directions (either original or supplied) by placing them in the right margin in a smaller typeface. There is a degree of subjectivity about which directions are of which kind, but the procedure is intended as a reminder to the reader and the actor that Shakespearean stage directions are often dependent upon editorial inference alone and are not set in stone. We also depart from editorial tradition in sometimes admitting uncertainty and thus printing permissive stage directions, such as an *Aside?* (often a line may be equally effective as an aside or a direct address—it is for each production or reading to make its own decision) or a *may exit* or a piece of business placed between arrows to indicate that it may occur at various different moments within a scene.

Line Numbers are editorial, for reference and to key the explanatory and textual notes.

Explanatory Notes explain allusions and gloss obsolete and difficult words, confusing phraseology, occasional major textual cruces, and so on. Particular attention is given to nonstandard usage, bawdy innuendo and technical terms (e.g. legal and military language). Where more than one sense is given, commas indicate shades of related meaning, slashes alternative or double meanings.

Textual Notes at the end of the play indicate major departures from the Folio. They take the following form: the reading of our text is given in bold and its source given after an equals sign, with “Q1” indicating that it derives from the First Quarto of 1597, “Q2” that it derives from the Second Quarto of 1599, “Q1/Q2” a reading in which the First and Second Quartos agree, “Q3” that it derives from the Third Quarto of 1609, “Q4” from the Fourth Quarto of 1622, “F” from the First Folio of 1623, “F2” a reading from the Second Folio of 1632, and “Ed” one that derives from the subsequent editorial tradition. The rejected Folio (“F”) reading is then given. So, for example, “1.4.68 maid = Q1. F = man” indicates that at Act 1 Scene 4 line 68, we have adopted the First Quarto’s “maid” because the First Folio’s “man” is not a defensible reading.

KEY FACTS

MAJOR PARTS: (*with percentage of lines/number of speeches/scenes on stage*) Romeo (20%/163/14), Juliet (18%/118/11), Friar Laurence (11%/55/7), Nurse (9%/90/11), Capulet (9%/51/9), Mercutio (8%/62/4), Benvolio (5%/64/7), Lady Capulet (4%/45/10), Escalus (3%/16/3), Paris (2%/23/5), Montague (1%/10/3).

LINGUISTIC MEDIUM: 90% verse, 10% prose.

DATE: 1595–96. Includes part for Will Kempe, who joined the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in 1594; published 1597, with assignment to “Lord Hunsdon’s Men” (the name of Shakespeare’s company from July 1596 to April 1597); astrological allusions and earthquake reference may suggest composition in 1595–96; close links with *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

SOURCES: Based on Arthur Brooke’s long narrative poem *The Tragical Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), which was itself based on an Italian novella by Matteo Bandello (1554, possibly known to Shakespeare via William Painter’s English translation in his 1567 *Palace of Pleasure*). Shakespeare’s alterations to Brooke include considerable expansion of the roles of the Nurse and Mercutio.

TEXT: The First Quarto (1597) is poorly printed, so has traditionally been assumed to be an orally reconstructed or “reported” text, though this assumption was challenged in the late twentieth century; it seems to have had a playhouse origin. The Second Quarto (1599) is longer and better printed, justifying its title-page claim “Newly corrected, augmented, and amended”; it is generally thought to have been derived from Shakespeare’s manuscript. A Third Quarto (1609) reprinted the Second, and a Fourth (1622) reprinted the Third, but with intelligent corrections, some of them deriving from consultation of the First Quarto. The 1623 First Folio text was printed from the Third Quarto, though introducing its own intelligent corrections and additional stage directions, but also many new errors as a result of its being printed almost entirely by “Compositor E,” by far the least competent of the workmen who set the Folio into print. Modern editions are traditionally based on the Second Quarto, but we respect the intentions of the Folio, seeking to retain the innovations of its original editor while eliminating what we judge to be its compositorial errors by means of emendation from the Second Quarto (and occasionally the other Quartos). The Folio lacks the Prologue, an omission we highlight by enclosing the lines within asterisks. Folio follows the Second Quarto in including a number of repeated lines (e.g. the description of dawn at the end of Act 2 Scene 1 and the beginning of Act 2 Scene 2); the likeliest explanation on each of the three occasions when this

occurs is that the first of the duplicated passages represents authorial “first thoughts” intended for deletion: these lines are retained in our text but are indicated by enclosure within double solidi (// //).

THE TRAGEDY OF
ROMEO AND JULIET

LIST OF PARTS

ORUS

MEO

MONTAGUE, Romeo's father

MRS MONTAGUE, Romeo's mother

MERCUTIO, Montague's nephew

MANTON, Montague's servingman

MANTON, Romeo's man

LIET

CAPULET, Juliet's father

MRS CAPULET, Juliet's mother

MURDERERS to Juliet

MANTON, Capulet's nephew

MURDERERS to CAPULET

MURDERERS to TRUCHIO

Servingmen to the Capulets

PETER

SAMPSON

GREGORY

MURDERERS to MURDERERS

MURDERERS to MURDERERS

PRINCE Escalus of Verona

His kinsmen

MERCUTIO

PARIS

MURDERERS to Paris

Mercutio's PAGE

MURDERERS to LAURENCE

MURDERERS to JOHN

OTHECARY

FICER

FIZENS

NSTABLE

ATCHMEN

Prologue

[Enter Chorus]

HORUS Two households, both alike in **dignity**¹,
fair **Verona**², where we lay our scene,
om **ancient** grudge break to new **mutiny**³,
here **civil**⁴ blood makes civil hands unclean.
om forth the **fatal**⁵ loins of these two foes
pair of **star-crossed** lovers **take their life**⁶,
hose **misadventured**⁷ piteous overthrows;
oth with their death bury their parents' strife.
ie **fearful passage**⁹ of their death-marked love;
id the continuance of their parents' rage,
hich, **but**¹¹ their children's end, nought could remove,
now the two hours' **traffic**¹² of our stage;
ie which if you with patient ears attend,
hat here shall **miss**¹⁴, our toil shall strive to mend.*

[Exit]

Act 1 Scene 1

running scene 1

*Enter Sampson and Gregory with swords and **bucklers**, of the House of Capulet*

SAMPSON Gregory, o'my word, we'll not **carry coals**.¹

GREGORY No, for then we should be **colliers**.²

SAMPSON I mean, if we be **in choler**, we'll **draw**.³

GREGORY Ay, while you live, **draw your neck out o'th'collar**.⁴

MPSON I **strike** quickly, being **moved**.⁵

EGORY But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

MPSON A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

EGORY To **move is to stir**; and to be **valiant** is to **stand**⁸:

erefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away.

MPSON A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will
ke the wall¹¹ of any man or maid of Montague's.

EGORY That shows thee a weak **slave**, for the weakest **goes to the wall**.¹³

MPSON True, and therefore women being the weaker
ssels are ever **thrust to the wall**¹⁵: therefore I will push
ontague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the
all.

EGORY The quarrel is between our masters and us their
en.¹⁹

MPSON 'Tis all **one**²⁰, I will show myself a tyrant: when I have
ught with the men, I will be civil with the maids, and cut
f their heads.

EGORY The heads of the maids?

MPSON Ay, the heads of the maids, or their **maidenheads**²⁴,
ke it in what sense thou wilt.

EGORY They must **take** it in **sense**²⁶ that feel it.

MPSON Me they shall feel while I am able to **stand**²⁷, and 'tis
own I am a **pretty piece of flesh**.²⁸

EGORY 'Tis well thou art not **fish**²⁹: if thou hadst, thou hadst
en **poor John**. Draw thy **tool**³⁰, here comes of the house of
e Montagues.

Enter two other Servingmen [Abraham and Balthasar]

Sampson draws

MPSON My **naked weapon**³² is out. Quarrel, I will back thee.

EGORY **How**³³, turn thy back and run?

MPSON **Fear**³⁴ me not.

EGORY No, **marry**³⁵, I fear thee!

MPSON Let us take the law **of**³⁶ our sides: let them begin.

EGORY I will frown as I pass by, and let them

Frowns

ke it as they **list**.³⁸

MPSON Nay, as they dare. I will **bite my thumb**³⁹

Bites his thumb

them, which is a disgrace to them if they bear it.

RAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

MPSON I do bite my thumb, sir.

RAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Aside

MPSON Is the law of our side, if I say ay?

EGORY No.

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

EGORY Do you quarrel, sir?

RAHAM Quarrel sir? No, sir.

MPSON If you do, sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as
u.

RAHAM No better?

MPSON Well, sir.

Enter Benvolio

Aside

EGORY Say 'better'— here comes one of my
aster's kinsmen.

MPSON Yes, better.

RAHAM You lie.

MPSON Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy

rashing⁵⁹ blow.

They fight

BENVOLIO Part, fools! Put up your swords, you

Draws and parts them

know not what you do.

Enter Tybalt

BALT What, art thou drawn among these **heartless hinds?**⁶²

Draws

Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

BENVOLIO I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,
I **will manage**⁶⁵ it to part these men with me.

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

Fight

Enter three or four Citizens with clubs

CITIZEN **Clubs, bills and partisans!**⁶⁹ Strike! Beat them down!
Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

Enter Old Capulet in his gown, and his Wife

CAPULET What noise is this? Give me my **long sword**⁷¹, ho!

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

CAPULET My sword, I say! Old Montague is come,
And flourishes his blade **in spite of**⁷⁴ me.

Enter Old Montague and his Wife

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

OLD MONTAGUE Thou shalt not stir a foot to seek a foe.

Enter Prince Escalus with his train

PRINCE Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
offenders of this neighbour-stained steel⁷⁸—

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

That quench the fire of your **pernicious**⁸⁰ rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins:
No pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your **mistempered**⁸³ weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your **movèd**⁸⁴ prince.
Three civil broils, bred of an airy word,
By thee, Old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,
And made Verona's **ancient**⁸⁸ citizens
Forget by their **grave beseeming ornaments**⁸⁹
To wield Old partisans, in hands as old,
Unkered with peace, to part your **cankered**⁹¹ hate:
Never you disturb our streets again,
Our lives shall **pay the forfeit of the peace.**⁹³
For this time, all the rest depart away:
You Capulet, shall go along with me,
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our further **pleasure**⁹⁷ in this case,
To old Freetown, our common judgement-place.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

Exeunt. [Montague, Lady Montague and Benvolio remain]

MONTAGUE Who set this ancient quarrel **new abroach?**¹⁰⁰

Speak, nephew, were you **by**¹⁰¹ when it began?

BENVOLIO Here were the servants of your adversary,

And yours, close fighting **ere**¹⁰³ I did approach:

I drew to part them: in the instant came

The fiery Tybalt, with his sword **prepared**¹⁰⁵,

Which, as he breathed defiance to my ears,

He swung about his head and cut the winds,

Who nothing hurt **withal**¹⁰⁸ hissed him in scorn:

While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,

me more and more, and fought on **part and part**¹¹⁰,

ll the prince came, who parted either part.

BY MONTAGUE O, where is Romeo? Saw you him today?

ght glad am I he was not at this fray.

INVOLIO Madam, an hour before the worshipped sun

ered **forth**¹¹⁵ the golden window of the east,

troubled mind **drave** me to walk **abroad**¹¹⁶,

here, underneath the grove of sycamore

at **westward rooteth from the city side**¹¹⁸,

early walking did I see your son:

towards him I made, but he was **ware**¹²⁰ of me

id stole into the **covert**¹²¹ of the wood:

measuring his **affections**¹²² by my own,

hich **then most sought where most might not be found**¹²³,

ing one too many by my weary self,

rsued my **humour**¹²⁵, not pursuing his,

id gladly shunned **who**¹²⁶ gladly fled from me.

MONTAGUE Many a morning hath he there been seen,

ith tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,

lding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs,

it all so soon as the all-cheering sun

ould in the farthest east begin to draw

ie shady curtains from **Aurora**¹³²'s bed,

vay from light steals home my **heavy son**¹³³,

id private in his chamber pens himself,

uts up his windows, locks fair daylight out

id makes himself an artificial night:

ack and portentous must this **humour**¹³⁷ prove,

iless good counsel may the cause remove.

INVOLIO My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

MONTAGUE I neither know it nor can learn **of**¹⁴⁰ him.

NVOLIO Have you **importuned him by any means?**¹⁴¹

MONTAGUE Both by myself and many other friends,
it he, his own affections' counsellor,
to himself — I will not say how **true**¹⁴⁴ —
it to himself so secret and so **close**¹⁴⁵,
so far from **sounding**¹⁴⁶ and discovery,
as the bud bit with an **envious worm**¹⁴⁷,
that he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
and dedicate his beauty to the same.
Would we but learn from whence his sorrows grow,
we would as willingly give cure as know.

Enter Romeo

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

MONTAGUE **I would thou wert so happy by thy stay**¹⁵⁴
to hear true **shrift**.¹⁵⁵— Come, madam, let's away.

Exeunt [Montague and Lady Montague]

NVOLIO Good morrow, **cousin**.¹⁵⁶

ROMEO Is the day so young?

NVOLIO But new struck nine.

ROMEO Ay me, sad hours seem long.

as that my father that went hence so fast?

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

ROMEO Not having that, which, having, makes them short.

NVOLIO In love?

ROMEO Out—

NVOLIO Of love?

ROMEO Out of her favour where I am in love.

NVOLIO Alas that love, so gentle in his **view**¹⁶⁷,
should be so tyrannous and rough in **proof**!¹⁶⁸

MEO Alas that love, whose view is [muffled still](#)¹⁶⁹,
ould, without eyes, see pathways to his will!
here shall we dine? O me! What fray was here?
t tell me not, for I have heard it all.
ere's much to do with hate, but more with love:
hy, then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
anything of nothing first [create!](#)¹⁷⁵
heavy lightness, serious [vanity](#)¹⁷⁶,
isshapen chaos of [well-seeming](#)¹⁷⁷ forms,
ather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,
[ill-waking](#)¹⁷⁹ sleep that is not what it is!
his love feel I, that feel no love in this.
ost thou not laugh?

NVOLIO No, coz, I rather weep.

MEO Good heart, at what?

NVOLIO At thy good heart's oppression.

MEO Why, such is love's transgression.

iefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast,
hich thou wilt [propagate](#)¹⁸⁷, to have it pressed
ith more of thine: this [love](#)¹⁸⁸ that thou hast shown
oth add more grief to too much of mine own.
ve is a smoke made with the fume of sighs,
ing [purged](#)¹⁹¹, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes,
ing [vexed](#)¹⁹², a sea nourished with loving tears.
hat is it else? A madness most [discreet](#)¹⁹³,
choking [gall](#)¹⁹⁴ and a preserving sweet.
rewell, my [coz.](#)¹⁹⁵

NVOLIO [Soft](#)¹⁹⁶, I will go along,

[I](#) [if](#)¹⁹⁷ you leave me so, you do me wrong.

MEO Tut, I have lost myself, I am not here:

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

NVOLIO Tell me in [sadness](#), who [is that](#)²⁰⁰ you love.

MEO What, shall I groan and tell thee?

NVOLIO Groan? Why, no. But sadly tell me who.

MEO A sick man in sadness makes his will:

word ill-urged to one that is so ill.

sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

NVOLIO I [aimed so near](#)²⁰⁶, when I supposed you loved.

MEO A right good [mark-man!](#)²⁰⁷ And she's fair I love.

NVOLIO A right [fair mark](#), fair coz, is soonest [hit](#).²⁰⁸

MEO Well, in that hit you miss: she'll not be hit

ith [Cupid's arrow](#), she hath [Dian's wit](#)²¹⁰,

id in strong [proof](#)²¹¹ of chastity well armed,

om [love's](#) weak childish bow she lives [uncharmed](#).²¹²

he will not [stay](#)²¹³ the siege of loving terms,

or [bide](#) th'[encounter](#)²¹⁴ of assailing eyes,

or [ope her lap to saint-seducing gold](#): ²¹⁵

she is rich in beauty, only poor

[that when she dies with beauty dies her store](#).²¹⁷

NVOLIO Then she hath sworn that she will [still](#)²¹⁸ live chaste?

MEO She hath, and in that [sparing](#) makes huge [waste](#)²¹⁹,

or beauty [starved](#)²²⁰ with her severity

its beauty off from all posterity.

he is too [fair](#)²²², too wise, wisely too fair,

o [merit bliss by making me despair](#).²²³

he hath [forsworn to](#)²²⁴ love, and in that vow

o I live dead that live to tell it now.

NVOLIO Be ruled by me, forget to think of her.

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

NVOLIO By giving liberty unto thine eyes:

amine other beauties.

MEO 'Tis the way

to call hers exquisite, in question more:²³¹

These happy masks²³² that kiss fair ladies' brows

Painting black puts us in mind they hide the fair.

And that is stricken²³⁴ blind cannot forget

The precious treasure of his eyesight lost:

Show me a mistress that is passing²³⁶ fair,

What doth her beauty serve, but as a note²³⁷

Here I may read who passed²³⁸ that passing fair?

How well, thou canst not teach me to forget.

PROVIO I'll pay that doctrine²⁴⁰, or else die in debt.

Exeunt

[Act 1 Scene 2]

running scene 2

Enter Capulet, County Paris and the Clown [a Servingman]

CAPULET Montague is bound¹ as well as I,

Penalty alike, and 'tis not hard, I think,

For men so old as we to keep the peace.

PARIS Of honourable reckoning⁴ are you both,

And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.

What now, my lord, what say you to my suit?⁶

CAPULET But saying o'er⁷ what I have said before:

My child is yet a stranger in the world,

She hath not seen the change⁹ of fourteen years,

Not two more summers wither in their pride¹⁰,

And we may think her ripe to be a bride.

PARIS Younger than she are happy mothers made.

CAPULET And too soon marred are those so early made.¹³

Her father hath swallowed all my hopes but she¹⁴:

e's the **hopeful** lady of my **earth**.¹⁵
it woo her, **gentle**¹⁶ Paris, get her heart:
y will to her consent is but a part;
l¹⁸ she agree, within her scope of choice
as my consent and fair **according**¹⁹ voice.
his night I hold an **old accustomed**²⁰ feast,
hereto I have invited many a guest,
ch as I love, and you among the **store**²²,
ie more, most welcome, makes my number more.
my poor house look to behold this night
rth-treading stars that make dark heaven light.
ch **comfort** as do **lusty**²⁶ young men feel
hen **well-apparelled**²⁷ April on the heel
limping winter treads, even such delight
ong fresh **fennel**²⁹ buds shall you this night
herit³⁰ at my house: hear all, all see,
id like her most whose merit most shall be,
hich one more view, of many mine being one³²,
ay stand in number, though in **reck'ning**³³ none.

To Servingman

me, go with me.— Go, **sirrah**³⁴, trudge about

Gives a list

rough fair Verona, find those persons out
hose names are written there and to them say,
y house and welcome on their pleasure **stay**.³⁷

Exeunt [Capulet and Paris]

RVINGMAN Find them out whose names are written. Here **it is**³⁸
ritten that the shoemaker should **meddle** with his **yard**³⁹,
d the tailor with his **last**, the fisher with his **pencil**⁴⁰, and the
inter with his nets. But I am sent to find those persons
hose names are here writ, and can never find what names

e writing person hath here writ — I must to the learned —
[good time](#).⁴⁴

Enter Benvolio and Romeo

BENVOLIO Tut, man, one fire burns out [another's](#)⁴⁵ burning,
the pain is lessened by another's anguish:

Iron giddy, and be [help](#) by [backward turning](#)⁴⁷:

the desperate grief cures with [another's languish](#)⁴⁸:

like thou some new infection to thy eye,

and the rank poison of the old will die.

ROMEO Your [plaintain](#)⁵¹ leaf is excellent for that.

BENVOLIO For what, I pray thee?

ROMEO For your [broken](#)⁵³ shin.

BENVOLIO Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

ROMEO Not mad, but [bound more than a madman](#)⁵⁵ is:

shut up in prison, kept without my food,

whipped and tormented and— Good [e'en](#)⁵⁷, good fellow.

DRIVINGMAN God [gi'](#)⁵⁸ good e'en. I pray, sir, can you read?

ROMEO Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

DRIVINGMAN Perhaps you have learned it [without book](#)⁶⁰: but, I
pray, can you read anything you see?

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

DRIVINGMAN Ye say honestly, [rest you merry!](#)⁶³

ROMEO Stay, fellow, I can read.

He reads the letter

'Signior Martino and his wife and daughters, County
Ulricke and his beauteous sisters, the lady widow of
Urbino, Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces, Mercutio
and his brother Valentine, mine uncle Capulet, his wife and
daughters, my fair niece Rosaline, Livia, Signior Valentio
and his cousin Tybalt, Lucio and the lively Helena.' A fair

sembly: [whither](#)⁷¹ should they come?

RVINGMAN Up.

MEO Whither? To supper?

RVINGMAN To our house.

MEO Whose house?

RVINGMAN My master's.

MEO Indeed, I should have asked you that before.

RVINGMAN Now I'll tell you without asking: my master is the
eat rich Capulet, and if you be not of the house of
ontagues, I pray come and [crush](#)⁸⁰ a cup of wine. Rest you
erry.

Exit

NVOLIO At this same [ancient](#)⁸² feast of Capulet's
ps the fair Rosaline whom thou so loves,
ith all the admired beauties of Verona:
o thither, and with [unattainted](#)⁸⁵ eye,
mpare her face with some that I shall show,
nd I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

MEO When the devout religion of mine eye
[aintains](#) such [falsehood](#)⁸⁹, then turn tears to fire,
nd [these](#)⁹⁰, who often drowned could never die,
[ansparent](#)⁹¹ heretics, be burnt for liars.

ie fairer than my love! The all-seeing sun
e'er saw her match since first the world begun.

NVOLIO Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by,
erself [poised](#)⁹⁵ with herself in either eye:
it in that crystal scales let there be weighed
[our lady's love](#)⁹⁷ against some other maid
at I will show you shining at this feast,
nd she shall [scant](#)⁹⁹ show well that now seems best.

MEO I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
it to rejoice in splendour of mine own.¹⁰¹

[Exeunt]

[Act 1 Scene 3]

running scene 3

Enter Capulet's Wife and Nurse

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

RSE Now by my maidenhead at twelve year old²,
made her come. What³, lamb! What, ladybird!
God forbid⁴, where's this girl? What, Juliet!

Enter Juliet

LIET How now? Who calls?

RSE Your mother.

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

DY CAPULET This is the matter.— Nurse, give leave⁸ awhile,
we must talk in secret.— Nurse, come back again,
I have remembered me, thou's¹⁰ hear our counsel.
You know'st my daughter's of a pretty¹¹ age.

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

DY CAPULET She's not fourteen.

RSE I'll lay fourteen¹⁴ of my teeth — and yet, to my teen
it spoken, I have but four — she's not fourteen. How long
it now to Lammas-tide?¹⁶

DY CAPULET A fortnight and odd days.

RSE Even or odd, of all days in the year, come Lammas¹⁸
eve at night shall she be fourteen. Susan¹⁹ and she — God rest
Christian souls! — were of an age. Well, Susan is with
God: she was too good for me. But as I said, on Lammas Eve
at night shall she be fourteen, that shall she, marry, I

member it well. 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven
ars, and she was weaned — I never shall forget it — of all
e days of the year, upon that day, for I had then **laid**²⁵
ormwood to my dug, sitting in the sun under the
vehouse wall. My lord and you were then at **Mantua**²⁷ —
y, I do **bear a brain**²⁸ — but, as I said, when it did taste the
ormwood on the nipple of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty
ol, to see it tetchy and fall out with the dug! 'Shake', quoth³⁰
e dovehouse: 'twas no need, I **throw**, to bid me **trudge**.³¹ And
nce that time it is eleven years, for then she could stand
one, nay, by **th'rood**³³, she could have run and waddled all
out, for even the day before, she **broke**³⁴ her brow, and then
y husband — God be with his soul, **a was**³⁵ a merry man —
ok up the child, 'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy
ce? Thou wilt **fall backward** when thou hast more **wit**³⁷, wilt
ou not, Jule?' And by my **holidam**³⁸, the pretty wretch left
ying and said 'Ay'. To see now how a jest shall **come about!**³⁹
varrant⁴⁰, an I should live a thousand years, I never should
rget it: 'Wilt thou not, Jule?' quoth he, and, pretty fool, it
nted⁴² and said 'Ay'.

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

RSE Yes, madam, yet I cannot choose but laugh, to think
should leave crying and say 'Ay'. And yet I warrant it had
on **it** brow a bump as big as a young cock'rel's **stone**⁴⁶, a
rilous knock, and it cried bitterly. 'Yea,' quoth my
usband, 'fall'st upon thy face? Thou wilt fall backward
en thou comest to age, wilt thou not, Jule?' It stinted and
id 'Ay'.

LLET And stint thou too, I pray thee, Nurse, **say I**.⁵¹

RSE Peace, I have done. God **mark thee to his grace!**⁵²
ou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed. An I might

ere to see thee married [once](#)⁵⁴, I have my wish.

DY CAPULET Marry, that 'marry' is the very theme
I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your [disposition](#)⁵⁷ to be married?

LIET It is an honour that I dream not of.

RSE An honour! Were not I thine only nurse, I would say
you hadst sucked wisdom from [thy teat](#).⁶⁰

DY CAPULET Well, think of marriage now: younger than you,
I were in Verona, ladies of esteem,
I have made already mothers. By my count,
I have e'en as many as [was your mother much upon these years](#)⁶⁴
that you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

RSE A man, young lady! Lady, such a man as all the
world — why, he's a [man of wax](#).⁶⁸

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

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

DY CAPULET What say you? Can you love the gentleman?

This night you shall behold him at our feast:
I had o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
I would find delight writ there with beauty's pen,
I would examine every [several lineament](#)⁷⁵,
I would see how one another lends [content](#)⁷⁶
I would find what obscured in this fair volume lies
And written in the [margent](#)⁷⁸ of his eyes.
This precious book of love, this [unbound](#)⁷⁹ lover,
I would beautify him, only lacks a [cover](#).⁸⁰

[The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride](#)⁸¹

to be fair without the fair within to hide.

That [book](#)⁸³ in many's eyes doth share the glory,
That in gold [clasps](#)⁸⁴ locks in the golden story:

shall you share all that he doth possess,
having him, making yourself no less.

NURSE No less? Nay, bigger: *women grow by men*.⁸⁷

TYBALT Speak briefly, can you *like of*⁸⁸ Paris' love?

TIEBALD I'll *look* to like, if looking *liking move*⁸⁹:

it no more deep will I *endart mine eye*⁹⁰

than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Enter a Servingman

SERVINGMAN Madam, the guests are come, supper served up,
you called, my young lady asked for, the nurse cursed in the
country, and everything in extremity. I must hence to wait: I
will seech you, follow *straight*.⁹⁵

Exit

TYBALT We follow thee.— Juliet, the *county stays*.⁹⁶

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

Exeunt

[Act 1 Scene 4]

running scene 4

Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, with five or six other Masquers, Torchbearers

ROMEO What, shall this *speech be spoke for our excuse?*¹

shall we on without apology?

BENVOLIO *The date is out of such prolixity*³:

we'll have no *Cupid hoodwinked*⁴ with a scarf,

carrying a *Tartar's painted bow of lath*⁵,

carrying the ladies like a *crow-keeper*.⁶

let them *measure*⁷ us by what they will,

we'll *measure them a measure*⁸, and be gone.

ROMEO Give me a torch, I am not for this *ambling*.⁹

ambling but *heavy*¹⁰, I will bear the light.

TRCUTIO Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

MEO Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes
with nimble soles, I have a soul of lead
that stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

TRCUTIO You are a lover, borrow Cupid's wings,
and soar with them above a common bound.¹⁶

MEO I am too sore enpierced with his shaft¹⁷
to soar with his light feathers and so bound¹⁸,
cannot bound a pitch above dull¹⁹ woe:
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

TRCUTIO And to sink in it should you burden love²¹,
no great oppression for a tender thing.²²

MEO Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,
too rude, too boist'rous, and it pricks²⁴ like thorn.

TRCUTIO If love be rough with you, be rough with love:
I tick love for pricking, and you beat love down.²⁶
Give me a case²⁷ to put my visage in,

Puts on a mask

visor for a visor!²⁸ What care I
what curious eye doth quote²⁹ deformities?
Where are the beetle brows³⁰ shall blush for me.

INVOLIO Come, knock and enter, and no sooner in,
that every man betake him to his legs.³²

MEO A torch for me: let wantons light of heart³³
kick the senseless rushes with their heels³⁴,
for I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase³⁵,
I'll be a candle-holder, and look on.³⁶
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.³⁷

TRCUTIO Tut, dun's the mouse, the constable's own word³⁸:
thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire³⁹

— [save your reverence](#)⁴⁰ — love, wherein thou stick'st

to the ears. Come, we [burn daylight](#)⁴¹, ho!

MEO Nay, that's not so.

ARCUTIO I mean, sir, in delay

we waste our lights in vain, light lights by day.

[Like our good meaning, for our judgement sits](#)⁴⁵

five times in that ere once in our five wits.

MEO And we [mean](#)⁴⁷ well in going to this masque,

it 'tis no [wit](#)⁴⁸ to go.

ARCUTIO Why, may one ask?

MEO I dreamt a dream [tonight](#).⁵⁰

ARCUTIO And so did I.

MEO Well, what was yours?

ARCUTIO That dreamers often lie.

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

ARCUTIO O, then I see [Queen Mab](#)⁵⁵ hath been with you:

she is the fairies' midwife, and she comes

in shape no bigger than an [agate-stone](#)⁵⁷

in the forefinger of an [alderman](#)⁵⁸,

drawn with a team of little [atomies](#)⁵⁹

to pierce men's noses as they lie asleep:

her wagon-spokes made of long [spinners](#)⁶¹' legs,

the cover of the wings of grasshoppers,

her [traces](#)⁶³ of the smallest spider's web,

her [collars](#)⁶³ of the moonshine's wat'ry beams,

her whip of cricket's bone, the [lash](#) of [film](#)⁶⁵,

her [waggoner](#)⁶⁶ a small grey-coated gnat,

not half so big as a round little [worm](#)⁶⁷

licked from the lazy finger of a maid,

her chariot is an empty hazel-nut

ade by the [joiner](#) squirrel or old [grub](#)⁷⁰,
me out o'mind the fairies' coachmakers.
id in this state she gallops night by night
rough lovers' brains, and then they dream of love,
1 courtiers' knees, that dream on [curtsies straight](#)⁷⁴,
er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees,
er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,
hich oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
ecause their breath with [sweetmeats](#)⁷⁸ tainted are:
metime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
id then dreams he of [smelling out a suit](#)⁸⁰:
id sometime comes she with a [tithe-pig](#)⁸¹'s tail
ckling a parson's nose as a lies asleep,
en he dreams of [another benefice](#).⁸³
metime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
id then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
' [breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades](#)⁸⁶,
' [healths five-fathom deep](#), and then [anon](#)⁸⁷
rums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
id being thus frightened swears a prayer or two
id sleeps again. This is that very Mab
at plaits the manes of horses in the night,
id [bakes](#) the [elflocks](#)⁹² in foul sluttish hairs,
hich once untangled, much misfortune bodes.
his is the [hag](#)⁹⁴, when maids lie on their backs,
at presses them and [learns](#) them first to [bear](#)⁹⁵,
aking them women of good [carriage](#)⁹⁶:
his is she—
MEO Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!
ou talk'st of [nothing](#).⁹⁹
RCUTIO True, I talk of dreams,

hich are the children of an idle brain,
got of nothing but vain¹⁰² fantasy,
hich is as thin of substance as the air
id more inconstant than the wind, who woos
en now the frozen bosom of the north,
id being angered puffs away from thence,
urning his side¹⁰⁷ to the dew-dropping south.

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

MEO I fear too early, for my mind misgives¹¹⁰
me consequence yet hanging in the stars
all bitterly begin his fearful date¹¹²
ith this night's revels and expire the term¹¹³
a despisèd life closed in my breast
r some vile forfeit¹¹⁵ of untimely death.

it he that hath the steerage of my course,
rect my suit. On, lusty gentlemen!

NVOLIO Strike, drum.¹¹⁸

They march about the stage and Servingmen come forth with their napkins

Enter [Chief] Servant

IEF SERVINGMAN Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take¹¹⁹
ay? He shift a trencher?¹²⁰ He scrape a trencher?

ST SERVINGMAN When good manners¹²¹ shall lie in one or two
en's hands and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul¹²² thing.

IEF SERVINGMAN Away with the joint-stools¹²³, remove the
urt-cupboard, look to the plate.¹²⁴ Good thou, save me a piece
marchpane¹²⁵, and as thou lovest me, let the porter let in
san Grindstone¹²⁶ and Nell.— Antony, and Potpan!

COND SERVINGMAN Ay, boy, ready.

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

FIRST SERVINGMAN We cannot be here and there too. *Cheerly*¹³⁰,
boys, be brisk awhile, and *the longer liver take all*.¹³¹

Exeunt [some Servingmen]

Enter all the Guests and Gentlewomen to the Masquers

CAPULET Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies that have their toes
impaired with corns will *walk a bout*¹³³ with you.

Now, my mistresses, which of you all
will now *deny* to dance? She that *makes dainty*¹³⁵,
I'll swear hath corns. *Am I come near ye now?*¹³⁶

Now welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day
that I have worn a visor and could tell
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

Second Capulet *hall*¹⁴², hall, give room! And foot it, girls.
More light, you knaves, and *turn the tables up*¹⁴³,
and quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.
Now, sirrah, *this unlooked-for*¹⁴⁵ sport comes well.
Now, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet,
for you and I are past our dancing days:
How long is't now since last yourself and I
were in a mask?

SECOND CAPULET *By'r lady*¹⁵⁰, thirty years.

CAPULET What, man? 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much:
'Tis since the nuptial of Lucentio,
some *Pentecost*¹⁵³ as quickly as it will,
some five and twenty years, and then we masked.

SECOND CAPULET 'Tis more, 'tis more, his son is elder, sir:
his son is thirty.

CAPULET Will you tell me that?

s son was but a [ward](#)¹⁵⁸ two years ago.

To a Servingman

MEO What lady is that, which doth enrich the hand
of yonder knight?

SERVINGMAN I know not, sir.

MEO O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!

It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night

As a rich jewel in an [Ethiopian's](#)¹⁶⁴ ear:

Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!¹⁶⁵

It shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,

As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.

In measure done, I'll watch [her place of stand](#)¹⁶⁸,

And touching hers, make blessed my [rude](#)¹⁶⁹ hand.

Did my heart love till now? [Forswear it](#)¹⁷⁰, sight,

For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

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

Tech me my [rapier](#)¹⁷³, boy.— What dares the slave

[Exit a Servingman]

Come hither, covered with an [antic](#)¹⁷⁴ face,

And [flee](#) and scorn at our [solemnity](#)?¹⁷⁵

Now, by the [stock](#)¹⁷⁶ and honour of my kin,

To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

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

BALT Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,

A villain that is hither come in spite,

To scorn at our solemnity this night.

PULET Young Romeo is it?

BALT 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

PULET Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone:

He bears him like a [portly](#)¹⁸⁵ gentleman,

And to say truth, Verona brags of him

be a virtuous and well-governed youth.
would not for the wealth of all this town
ere in my house do him disparagement:
erefore be patient, take no note of him.
is my will, the which if thou respect,
ow a fair presence and put off these frowns,
ill-beseeming *semblance*¹⁹³ for a feast.

BALT It fits when such a villain is a guest:
I will not endure him.

PULET He shall be endured.

What, *goodman boy*? I say, he shall: *go to*.¹⁹⁷

Am I the master here or you? Go to.

Will you not endure him? *God shall mend my soul*¹⁹⁹,

will you make a mutiny among my guests?

Will you will *set cock-a-hoop*? You'll *be the man*?²⁰¹

BALT Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

PULET Go to, go to.

Will you are a *saucy*²⁰⁴ boy. Is't so, indeed?

This trick may chance to *scathe* you, *I know what*.²⁰⁵

Will you must *contrary* me? Marry, 'tis *time*.²⁰⁶—

To Dancers/To Tybalt

Well *said*, my *hearts*!— You are a *princox*.²⁰⁷ Go,

To Servants

To Tybalt

Be quiet, or— More light, more light!— for shame,

To Dancers

I will make you quiet.— What, cheerly, my hearts!

BALT Patience *perforce* with wilful *choler*²¹⁰ meeting

makes my flesh tremble in their *different*²¹¹ greeting.

The villain will withdraw, but this intrusion shall

now seeming sweet convert to bitter gall.

Exit

To Juliet

MEO If I profane²¹⁴ with my unworhiest hand
his holy shrine²¹⁵, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

LIET Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this²¹⁹,
For saints²²⁰ have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers²²¹' kiss.

MEO Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

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

MEO O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
They pray, grant thou²²⁵, lest faith turn to despair.

LIET Saints do not move²²⁶, though grant for prayers' sake.

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

Kisses her

LIET Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

MEO Sin from my lips? O, trespass sweetly urged!²³⁰
Give me my sin again.

Kisses her again

LIET You kiss by th'book.²³²

Juliet stands aside

RSE Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

MEO What²³⁴ is her mother?

RSE Marry, bachelor²³⁵,
Her mother is the lady of the house,
And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous.
She nursed her daughter, that you talked withal.²³⁸

ell you, he that can lay hold of²³⁹ her
all have the chinks.²⁴⁰

Aside?

MEO Is she a Capulet?
dear account! My life is my foe's debt.²⁴²

Comes forward

NVOLIO Away, begone, the sport is at the best.²⁴³

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

The guests indicate that they have to leave

PULET Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone,
e have a trifling foolish banquet towards.²⁴⁶
it e'en so? Why then I thank you all.
hank you, honest²⁴⁸ gentlemen, goodnight.—

To Servingmen

ore torches here!— Come on, then let's to bed.
l, sirrah, by my fay²⁵⁰, it waxes late:
l to my rest.

[Exeunt all but Juliet and Nurse]

LIET Come hither, nurse. What is yond²⁵² gentleman?

RSE The son and heir of old Tiberio.

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

RSE Marry, that I think be young Petruchio.

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

RSE I know not.

LIET Go ask his name.— If he be married,

The Nurse goes

y grave is like²⁵⁹ to be my wedding bed.

Returning

RSE His name is Romeo, and a Montague,
ie only son of your great enemy.

LIET My only love sprung from my only hate!

So early seen unknown, and known too late!

Odious²⁶⁴ birth of love it is to me,

That I must love a loathed enemy.

RSE What's this? What's this?

LIET A rhyme I learned even now

Of one I danced withal.

One calls within 'Juliet!'

RSE Anon²⁶⁹, anon!

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

Exeunt

[Act 2]

[Enter] Chorus

CHORUS Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,

And young affection **gapes**² to be his heir:

That **fair** for which love **groaned for and would die**³,

With tender Juliet **matched**⁴, is now not fair.

Now Romeo is beloved and loves **again**⁵,

like bewitched by the charm of **looks**⁶,

That to his **foe supposed** he must **complain**⁷,

And she steal love's sweet bait from **fearful**⁸ hooks.

Being held a foe, he may not have access

To breathe such vows as lovers **use**¹⁰ to swear,

And she as much in love, her means much less

To meet her new-belovèd anywhere:

But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,

Temp'ring extremities¹⁴ with extreme sweet.

[Exit]

[Act 2 Scene 1]

Enter Romeo alone

ROMEO Can I go forward¹ when my heart is here?

Stands aside

Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre² out.

Enter Benvolio with Mercutio

BENVOLIO Romeo! My cousin Romeo, Romeo!

MERCUTIO He is wise,

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

BENVOLIO He ran this way and leapt this orchard⁶ wall.

Well, good Mercutio.

MERCUTIO Nay, I'll conjure⁸ too.

Romeo! Humours!⁹ Madman! Passion! Lover!

Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh,

speak but one rhyme¹¹, and I am satisfied:

By but 'Ay me', pronounce but 'love' and 'dove',

speak to my gossip Venus¹³ one fair word,

the nickname for her purblind¹⁴ son and heir,

young Abraham Cupid¹⁵, he that shot so true,

when King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid!¹⁶—

Aside

He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not,

the ape is dead¹⁸, and I must conjure him.—

Conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,

or her high forehead and her scarlet lip,

or her fine foot, straight leg and quiv'ring thigh,

and the demesnes²² that there adjacent lie,

that in thy likeness thou appear to us.

BENVOLIO An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

MERCUTIO This cannot anger him: 'twould anger him

to raise a spirit in his mistress' circle²⁶

of some **strange** nature, letting it there **stand**²⁷

all she had **laid it and conjured it down**²⁸:

that were some **spite**.²⁹ My invocation

fair and **honest**³⁰, and in his mistress' name

conjure only but to raise up him.

BENVOLIO Come, he hath hid himself among these trees,

to be **consorted with** the **humorous**³³ night:

and is his love and best befits the dark.

MERCUTIO If love be blind, love cannot **hit the mark**.³⁵

How will he sit under a **medlar**³⁶ tree,

and wish his mistress were that kind of fruit

that maids call medlars, when they laugh alone.—

³⁹ Romeo, that she were, O, that she were

an **open arse** and thou a **pop'rin pear!**⁴⁰

Romeo, goodnight: I'll to my **truckle-bed**⁴¹,

his **field-bed**⁴² is too cold for me to sleep.—

Come, shall we go?

BENVOLIO Go, then, for 'tis in vain

to seek him here that means not to be found.

Exeunt [Benvolio and Mercutio]

Comes forward

MERCUTIO He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[*Enter Juliet above*]

What, soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

who is already sick and pale with grief,

that thou her **maid**⁵¹ art far more fair than she:

It is not her maid, since she is envious:

Her **vestal livery**⁵³ is but sick and green

and none but fools do wear it, cast it off.

is my lady, O, it is my love!

that she knew she were!

She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?

My eye discourses: I will answer it.

I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:

Who of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres⁶² till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp, her eye in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night.

How she leans her cheek upon her hand!

That I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

LIET Ay me!

Aside

MEO She speaks:

Do not speak again, bright angel, for thou art

As glorious⁷⁴ to this night, being o'er my head

As if a wingèd messenger of heaven

Had stooped to the white upturned⁷⁶ wond'ring eyes

Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him

When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds,

And sails upon the bosom of the air.

LIET O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore⁸⁰ art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name,

Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,

And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Aside

MEO Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

LIET 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy,
thou art thyself, though⁸⁶ not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
belonging to a man. O, be some other name.
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
by any other word would smell as sweet,
but Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
lose that dear perfection which he owes⁹³
without that title. Romeo, doff⁹⁴ thy name,
and for⁹⁵ thy name, which is no part of thee,
I will take all myself.

To her

MEO I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized,
henceforth I never will be Romeo.

LIET What man art thou that thus bescreened¹⁰⁰ in night
do stumblest on my counsel?¹⁰¹

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

LIET My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

MEO Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

LIET How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
and the place death, considering who thou art,

any of my kinsmen find thee here.

MEO With love's light wings did I o'er-perch¹¹⁵ these walls,
Or stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt:
Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

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

MEO Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof¹²² against their enmity.

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

MEO I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes,
And but¹²⁵ thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of¹²⁷ thy love.

LIET By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

MEO By love, that first did prompt me to inquire:
He lent me counsel¹³⁰ and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot¹³¹, yet wert thou as far
As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,
I should adventure for such merchandise.

LIET Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
None would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight
In would I dwell on form¹³⁷, fain, fain deny
That I have spoke: but farewell compliment!¹³⁸
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay',
And I will take thy word. Yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false: at lovers' perjuries
They say Jove¹⁴² laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce¹⁴³ it faithfully:
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,

l frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
· thou wilt woo, but **else**¹⁴⁶ not for the world.
truth, fair Montague, I am too **fond**¹⁴⁷,
id therefore thou mayst think my behaviour **light**¹⁴⁸:
it trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
ian those that have more **coying** to be **strange**.¹⁵⁰
ould have been more strange, I must confess,
it that thou overheard'st, ere I was **ware**¹⁵²,
y true love's passion: therefore pardon me,
id not impute this yielding to light love,
hich the dark night hath so **discoverèd**.¹⁵⁵

MEO Lady, by yonder blessèd moon I vow
iat tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

LIET O, swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon,
iat monthly changes in her **circlèd orb**¹⁵⁹,
st that thy love prove likewise variable.

MEO What shall I swear by?

LIET Do not swear at all:

· if thou wilt, swear by thy **gracious**¹⁶³ self,
hich is the god of my idolatry,
id I'll believe thee.

MEO If my heart's dear love—

LIET Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
lave no joy of this **contract**¹⁶⁸ tonight:
is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
o like the lightning, which doth cease to be
e one can say 'It lightens'. Sweet, goodnight!
is bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
ay prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
odnight, goodnight, as sweet repose and rest
me to thy heart as that within my breast!

MEO O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

LIET What [satisfaction](#)¹⁷⁷ canst thou have tonight?

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

LIET I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:

id yet I would it [were](#)¹⁸⁰ to give again.

MEO Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

LIET But to be [frank](#)¹⁸² and give it thee again.

id yet I wish but for the thing I have.

y [bounty](#)¹⁸⁴ is as boundless as the sea,

y love as deep: the more I give to thee,

ie more I have, for both are infinite.

iear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!—

[Nurse] calls within

ion, good nurse!— Sweet Montague, be true.

ay but a little, I will come again.

[Exit, above]

MEO O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,

ing in night, all this is but a dream,

o flattering-sweet to be substantial.

[Enter Juliet, above]

LIET Three words, dear Romeo, and goodnight indeed.

that thy [bent](#)¹⁹⁴ of love be honourable,

y purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,

r one that I'll procure to come to thee,

here and what time thou wilt perform the rite,

id all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,

id follow thee my lord throughout the world.

[Nurse calls] within 'Madam!'

ome, anon.— But if thou mean'st not well,

lo beseech thee—

[Nurse calls] within 'Madam!'

and by, I come.—

cease thy [strife](#)²⁰³, and leave me to my grief.

tomorrow will I send.

MEO So thrive my soul—

LIET A thousand times goodnight!

Exit, [above]

MEO A thousand times the worse, to [want](#)²⁰⁷ thy light.

ve goes toward love as schoolboys from their books,

Romeo starts to go

it love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

Enter Juliet again, [above]

LIET [Hist](#)²¹⁰, Romeo, hist! O, for a falc'ner's voice,

o lure this [tassel-gentle](#)²¹¹ back again!

[Vndage is hoarse](#)²¹², and may not speak aloud,

se would I tear the cave where [Echo](#)²¹³ lies,

id make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,

ith repetition of my 'Romeo'.

MEO It is my soul that calls upon my name.

ow silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,

ke softest music to attending ears!

LIET Romeo!

MEO My [nyas](#)?²²⁰

LIET What o'clock tomorrow shall I send to thee?

MEO By the hour of nine.

LIET I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.

ave forgot why I did call thee back.

MEO Let me stand here till thou remember it.

LIET I shall forget, [to](#) have thee [still](#)²²⁶ stand there,

rememb'ring how I love thy company.

MEO And I'll still stay, [to](#) have thee still forget,

forgetting any other home but this.

LIET 'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone:

and yet no further than a wanton's²³¹ bird,

that lets it hop a little from his hand,

like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves²³³,

and with a silken thread plucks it back again,

loving-jealous of his liberty.

MEO I would I were thy bird.

LIET Sweet, so would I:

that I should kill thee with much cherishing.

Goodnight, goodnight! Parting is such sweet sorrow,

that I shall say goodnight till it be morrow.

Exit, [above]

MEO Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!

Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night, //

Check'ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light, //

And darkness fleckled²⁴⁵ like a drunkard reels //

From forth day's pathway, made by Titan²⁴⁶'s wheels. //

Hence will I to my ghostly friar's close cell²⁴⁷,

whose help to crave, and my dear hap²⁴⁸ to tell.

Exit

[Act 2 Scene 2]

running scene 6

Enter Friar Laurence alone with a basket

FRIAR LAURENCE The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,

check'ring the eastern clouds with streaks of light,

and fleckled darkness like a drunkard reels

from forth day's path and Titan's burning wheels:

Now, ere the sun advance⁵ his burning eye,

ie day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,
must upfill this [osier cage](#)⁷ of ours
ith [baleful](#)⁸ weeds and precious-juicèd flowers.
ie earth that's nature's mother is her tomb:
hat is her burying grave, that is her womb,
id from her womb children of [divers](#)¹¹ kind
e sucking on her natural bosom find:
any for many virtues excellent,
[one but for some](#)¹⁴ and yet all different.
[mickle](#)¹⁵ is the powerful grace that lies
plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities:
r nought so vile that on the earth doth live
it to the earth some special good doth give,
r [ought](#) so good but [strained](#)¹⁹ from that fair use
volts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.
rtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
id vice sometime by action dignified.

Enter Romeo

ithin the infant rind of this weak flower
ison hath residence and medicine power:
r this, being smelt, with [that part](#)²⁵ cheers each part,
eing tasted, [slays](#) all senses [with](#)²⁶ the heart.
vo such opposèd kings encamp [them still](#)²⁷
man as well as herbs, grace and rude will:
id where the worser is predominant,
ll soon the [canker](#)³⁰ death eats up that plant.

MEO Good morrow, father.

LAR LAURENCE [Benedicite!](#)³²

hat early tongue so sweet saluteth me?
ung son, it [argues](#) a [distempered](#)³⁴ head
soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:

ire³⁶ keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
and where care lodges, sleep will never lie,
but where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain
doth couch³⁹ his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign:
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
That thou art uproused with some distemp'rature,
And if not so, then here I hit it right,
For Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

ROMEO That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

LAR LAURENCE God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?

ROMEO With Rosaline, my ghostly father? No,
I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

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

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

I have been feasting with mine enemy,
And here on a sudden one hath wounded me,
That's by me wounded: both our remedies
I'll give within thy help and holy physic⁵³ lies.

Dear no hatred, blessed man, for lo⁵⁴,
By intercession likewise steads⁵⁵ my foe.

LAR LAURENCE Be plain, good son, rest homely in thy drift⁵⁶,
And maddling confession finds but riddling shrift.⁵⁷

ROMEO Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet:
Whom mine on hers, so hers is set on mine;
And all combined, save what thou must combine
Of holy marriage. When and where and how
I met, we wooed and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass, but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us today.

LAR LAURENCE Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!

Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,
soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies
not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
O Maria, what a deal of brine
with washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
O season love, that of it doth not taste!
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
My old⁷⁵ groans yet ringing in my ancient ears:
O, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.
E'er thou wast thyself and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.

Would art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence⁸⁰ then:
Women may fall, when there's no strength in men.

MELOTH Thou chide'st⁸² me oft for loving Rosaline.

DIAMOND LAURENCE For dotting, not for loving, pupil mine.

MELOTH And bid'st⁸⁴ me bury love.

DIAMOND LAURENCE Not in a grave,

But lay one in, another out to have.

MELOTH I pray thee, chide me not. Her I love now

With grace⁸⁸ for grace and love for love allow:

The other did not so.

DIAMOND LAURENCE O, she knew well

Why love did read by rote⁹¹ that could not spell.

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

For one respect⁹³ I'll thy assistant be:

For this alliance may so happy prove,

That turn your households' rancour to pure love.

MELOTH O, let us hence! I stand⁹⁶ on sudden haste.

DIAMOND LAURENCE Wisely and slow: they stumble that run fast.

[Act 2 Scene 3]

running scene 7

Enter Benvolio and Mercutio

MERCUTIO Where the devil should this Romeo be?

Why, he is not home tonight?²

BENVOLIO Not to his father's: I spoke with his man.³

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

BENVOLIO Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet,

hath sent a letter to his father's house.

MERCUTIO A challenge, on my life.

BENVOLIO Romeo will answer it.⁹

MERCUTIO Any man that can write may answer a letter.

BENVOLIO Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he likes, being dared.¹²

MERCUTIO Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead, stabbed with the white wench's black eye¹⁴, run through the ear with a loving, the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's¹⁵ butt-shaft¹⁶: and is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

BENVOLIO Why, what is Tybalt?

MERCUTIO More than prince of cats¹⁸, O, he's the courageous captain of compliments: he fights as you sing prick-song¹⁹, keeps time, distance and proportion: he rests his minim rests²⁰, one, two, and the third in your bosom — the very butcher of²¹ silk button — a duellist, a duellist, a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause.²³ Ah, the immortal passado²⁴, the *punto reverso*, the *hay*!

BENVOLIO The what?

MERCUTIO The pox of such antic, lispings, affecting phantasimes²⁶, these new tuners of accent! 'Jesu, a very good blade²⁷, a very ill²⁸ man, a very good whore!' Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire²⁹, that we should be thus afflicted with these change flies³⁰, these fashion-mongers, these 'pardon-me's', to stand so much on the new form³¹, that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O, their bones³², their bones!

Enter Romeo

MENVIOLIO Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

MERCUTIO Without his roe, like a dried herring: O flesh³⁴, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that³⁵ the archflowed in³⁶: Laura to his lady was a kitchen-wench — marry, she had a better love to berhyme her — Dido a dowdy³⁷, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings³⁸ and harlots, Desdemona a grey eye or so, but not³⁹ to the purpose.— Signior Romeo, bon jour: there's a French salutation to your French⁴⁰ hip. You gave us the counterfeit⁴¹ fairly last night.

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

MERCUTIO The slip, sir, the slip — can you not conceive?⁴⁴

ROMEO Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great, and such a case⁴⁶ as mine a man may strain courtesy.

MERCUTIO That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.⁴⁸

ROMEO Meaning, to curtsy.⁴⁹

MERCUTIO Thou hast most kindly hit it.⁵⁰

ROMEO A most courteous exposition.

MERCUTIO Nay, I am the very pink⁵² of courtesy.

ROMEO Pink for flower.

MERCUTIO Right.

MEO Why, then is my pump well flowered.⁵⁵

RCUTIO Sure wit, follow me⁵⁶ this jest now till thou hast worn it thy pump, that when the single⁵⁷ sole of it is worn, the jest may remain after the wearing sole singular.⁵⁸

MEO O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness.⁵⁹

RCUTIO Come between us, good Benvolio, my wits faints.

MEO Switch and spurs, switch and spurs, or I'll cry a⁶¹ catch.

RCUTIO Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase⁶³, I am content, for thou hast more of the wild-goose⁶⁴ in one of thy wits than I am sure I have in my whole five. Was I with you there⁶⁵ for the goose?

MEO Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast not there for the goose.⁶⁸

RCUTIO I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

MEO Nay, good goose, bite not.

RCUTIO Thy wit is a very bitter sweetening: it is a most sharp⁷¹ wit.

MEO And is it not then well served into a sweet goose?⁷³

RCUTIO O, here's a wit of cheverel⁷⁴, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell⁷⁵ broad!

MEO I stretch it out for that word 'broad', which added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad⁷⁷ goose.

RCUTIO Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo, now art thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature: for this drivelling⁸⁰ wit is like a great natural, that runs lolling⁸¹ up and down to catch his bauble in a hole.⁸²

BENVOLIO Stop there⁸³, stop there.

RCUTIO Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.⁸⁴

RVOLIO Thou wouldst else have made thy tale **large**.⁸⁵

RCUTIO O, thou art deceived: I would have made it **short**⁸⁶, for **vas come to the whole depth**⁸⁷ of my tale, and meant indeed **occupy the argument**⁸⁸ no longer.

Enter Nurse and her man [Peter]

MEO Here's **goodly gear. A sail**⁸⁹, a sail!

RCUTIO Two, two: a **shirt and a smock**.⁹⁰

RSE Peter?

TER Anon.

RSE My fan, Peter.

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

RSE God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

RCUTIO God ye good e'en, fair gentlewoman.

RSE Is it good e'en?

RCUTIO 'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy **hand**⁹⁹ of the dial
now upon the **prick**¹⁰⁰ of noon.

RSE **Out upon you! What**¹⁰¹ a man are you?

MEO One, gentlewoman, **that God hath made himself to**¹⁰²
ar.

RSE By my **troth**¹⁰⁴, it is well said: 'for himself to mar',
loth a?¹⁰⁵ Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find
e young Romeo?

MEO I can tell you, but young Romeo will be older when
u have found him than he was when you sought him: I am
e youngest of that name, for **fault**¹⁰⁹ of a worse.

RSE You say well.

RCUTIO Yea, is the worst well? Very well **took**¹¹¹, i'faith, wisely,
sely.

RSE If you be he, sir, I desire some **confidence**¹¹³ with you.

BENVOLIO She will **indite** him to some **supper**.¹¹⁴

MERCUTIO A **bawd**, a bawd, a bawd! **So ho!**¹¹⁵

BENVOLIO What hast thou found?

MERCUTIO No **hare**, sir, unless a hare, sir, in a **Lenten pie**¹¹⁷, that is
mething **stale** and **hoar** ere it **be spent**.¹¹⁸

Sings

An old hare hoar,
And an old hare hoar,
Is very good **meat**¹²¹ in Lent.
But a hare that is **hoar**¹²²
Is **too much for a score**¹²³,
When it **hoars**¹²⁴ ere it be spent.

BENVOLIO, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner,
either.

BENVOLIO I will follow you.

Sings

MERCUTIO Farewell, ancient lady, farewell, 'lady,
lady, lady'.

Exeunt Mercutio, Benvolio

PETER I pray you, sir, what saucy **merchant**¹³⁰ was this that
was so full of his **ropery?**¹³¹

BENVOLIO A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk,
and will speak more in a minute than he will **stand to**¹³³ in a
month.

PETER **An a** speak anything against me, I'll **take him down**¹³⁵,
if he were **lustier** than he is, and twenty such **Jacks**¹³⁶, and if I
cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave, I am none of
his **flirt-gills**, I am none of his **skains-mates**.¹³⁸—

To Peter

Wouldst thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to **use**¹³⁹
me at his pleasure?

TEER I saw no man use you at his pleasure: if I had, my
sapon¹⁴² should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I dare
swear as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good
barrel, and the law on my side.

RSE Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part¹⁴⁵ about

To Romeo

me quivers. Scurvy knave!— Pray you, sir, a word:
as I told you, my young lady bid me inquire you out:
what she bid me say, I will keep to myself. But first let me tell
you, if ye should lead her in a fool's paradise, as they say, it
were a very gross kind of behaviour, as they say, for the
gentlewoman is young, and therefore, if you should deal¹⁵¹
truly with her, truly it were an ill thing to be offered to any
gentlewoman, and very weak¹⁵³ dealing.

MEO Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I
do protest¹⁵⁵ unto thee—

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

MEO What wilt thou tell her, nurse? Thou dost not mark¹⁵⁸
me.

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

MEO Bid her devise
some means to come to shrift¹⁶³ this afternoon,
and there she shall at Friar Laurence' cell
be shrived¹⁶⁵ and married. Here is for thy pains.

Attempts to give money

RSE No truly, sir, not a penny.

MEO Go to, I say you shall.

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

MEO And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall:

ithin this hour my man shall be with thee

id bring thee [cords made like a tackled stair](#)¹⁷¹,

hich to the high [top-gallant](#)¹⁷² of my joy

ust be my convoy in the secret night.

rewell, be trusty and I'll [quit](#)¹⁷⁴ thy pains.

rewell, commend me to thy mistress.

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

MEO What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

RSE Is your man [secret](#)?¹⁷⁸ Did you ne'er hear say,

[wo may keep counsel, putting one away](#)?¹⁷⁹

MEO [Warrant thee](#)¹⁸⁰, my man's as true as steel.

RSE Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady — Lord,

rd! When 'twas a little [prating](#)¹⁸² thing — O, there is a

bleman in town, one Paris, that would [fain lay knife](#)¹⁸³

oard, but she, good soul, had [as lief](#)¹⁸⁴ see a toad, a very toad,

see him. I anger her sometimes and tell her that Paris is

e [properer](#)¹⁸⁶ man, but, I'll warrant you, when I say so, she

oks as pale as any [clout](#) in the [versal](#)¹⁸⁷ world. Doth not

[semmary](#)¹⁸⁸ and Romeo begin both with a letter?

MEO Ay, nurse, what of that? Both with an R.

RSE A mocker! That's the [dog's name: R is for the](#)—¹⁹⁰ no, I

ow it begins with some other letter — and she hath the

ettest [sententious](#)¹⁹² of it, of you and rosemary, that it would

o you good to hear it.

MEO Commend me to thy lady.

[Exit Romeo]

RSE Ay, a thousand times.— Peter?

TER Anon.

RSE Before and [apace](#).¹⁹⁷

[Act 2 Scene 4]

running scene 8

Enter Juliet

LIET The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse:

half an hour she promised to return.

chance she cannot meet him: that's not so.

she is **lame!** Love's **herald**⁴ should be thoughts,
which ten times faster glides than the sun's beams,
driving back shadows over **louring**⁶ hills:

Therefore do **nimble-pinioned doves draw love**⁷,
and therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.

Now is the sun upon the highmost hill

of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve
three long hours, yet she is not come.

And she affections and warm youthful blood,
she would be as swift in motion as a ball:

My words would **bandy**¹⁴ her to my sweet love,
and his to me.

But old folks, many feign as they were dead,
unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

Enter Nurse [and Peter]

God, she comes! O honey nurse, what news?

Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

NURSE Peter, stay at the gate.

[*Exit Peter*]

LIET Now, good sweet nurse — O Lord, why look'st thou sad?

Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily:

Good, thou sham'st the music of sweet news

By playing it to me with so sour a face.

NURSE I am aweary, give me leave awhile.

o, how my bones ache! What a **jaunt**²⁶ have I had!

LIET I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news:

ay, come, I pray thee speak, good, good nurse, speak.

NURSE Jesu, what haste? Can you not stay awhile?

o you not see that I am out of breath?

LIET How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath

o say to me that thou art out of breath?

ie excuse that thou dost make in this delay

longer than the tale thou dost excuse.

thy news good or bad? Answer to that.

y either, and I'll **stay the circumstance**³⁶:

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

NURSE Well, you have made a **simple**³⁸ choice, you know not

ow to choose a man: Romeo? No, not he, though his face be

tter than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's, and for a

nd and a foot and a body, though they be not to be talked

, yet they are past compare: he is not the flower of

urtesy, but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy

ays, wench, serve God. What, have you dined at home?

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

hat says he of our marriage? What of that?

NURSE Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!

beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.

y back o't'other side — O, my back, my back!

LIET **shrew**⁵⁰ your heart for sending me about,

o catch my death with jaunting up and down!

LIET I'faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.

weet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

NURSE Your love says, like an **honest**⁵⁴ gentleman, and a

urteous, and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a

rtuous— Where is your mother?

LIET Where is my mother? Why, she is within,
here should she be? How oddly thou repliest:
our love says, like an honest gentleman,
here is your mother?’

RSE O [God’s lady](#)⁶¹ dear!

’e you so [hot](#)? Marry, [come up](#)⁶², I trow.
this the [poultice](#)⁶³ for my aching bones?
enceforward do your messages yourself.

LIET Here’s such a [coil](#)!⁶⁵ Come, what says Romeo?

RSE Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

LIET I have.

RSE Then [hie](#)⁶⁸ you hence to Friar Laurence’ cell,
ere stays a husband to make you a wife:

ow comes the [wanton](#)⁷⁰ blood up in your cheeks,
ey’ll be in scarlet straight at any news.

e you to church, I must another way,

o fetch a ladder, by the which your love

ust climb a [bird’s nest](#)⁷⁴ soon when it is dark:

in the drudge and toil in your delight,

it you shall [bear the burden](#)⁷⁶ soon at night.

o, I’ll to dinner: hie you to the cell.

LIET Hie to high fortune! Honest nurse, farewell.

Exeunt

[\[Act 2 Scene 5\]](#)

running scene 9

Enter Friar and Romeo

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

MEO Amen, amen. But come what sorrow can,
cannot [countervail](#)⁴ the exchange of joy
that one short minute gives me in her sight:
O thou but [close](#)⁶ our hands with holy words,
when love-devouring death do what he dare,
it is enough I may but call her mine.

LIAR LAURENCE These violent delights have violent ends,
and in their triumph die, like fire and [powder](#)¹⁰,
which as they kiss [consume](#).¹¹ The sweetest honey
is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
and in the taste [confounds](#)¹³ the appetite:
Therefore love moderately, long love doth so:
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Running

Enter Juliet

Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot
will ne'er wear out the everlasting [flint](#)¹⁷:
My lover may bestride the [gossamers](#)¹⁸
that idles in the [wanton](#)¹⁹ summer air,
and yet not fall, so [light](#) is [vanity](#).²⁰

LIET Good even to my ghostly confessor.

LIAR LAURENCE Romeo shall [thank thee](#)²², daughter, for us both.

LIET [As much to him, else is his thanks too much](#).²³

MEO Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy
be heap'd like mine, and [that](#)²⁵ thy skill be more
to [blazon](#)²⁶ it, then sweeten with thy breath
this neighbour air, and let rich [music's tongue](#)²⁷
unfold the [imagined](#)²⁸ happiness that both
may receive [in either](#)²⁹ by this dear encounter.

LIET [Conceit](#), more rich in [matter](#)³⁰ than in words,
shows us the value of his substance, not of [ornament](#)³¹:

they are but beggars that can count their worth,
if my true love is grown to such excess
I cannot **sum up sum**³⁴ of half my wealth.

DIAR LAURENCE Come, come with me, and we will make short work,
for, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
In all holy church incorporate two in one.

[Exeunt]

[Act 3 Scene 1]

running scene 10

Enter Mercutio, Benvolio and Men

BENVOLIO I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire:

The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,

and if we meet, we shall not **scape**³ a brawl,

for now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

MERCUTIO Thou art like one of these fellows that when he enters the confines of a tavern, **claps me**⁶ his sword upon the table and says 'God send me no need of thee!' and **by the**⁷ generation of the second cup **draws him on the drawer**⁸, when indeed there is no need.

BENVOLIO Am I like such a fellow?

MERCUTIO Come, come, thou art as hot a **Jack** in thy **mood**¹¹ as a fire in Italy, and as soon **moved**¹² to be moody, and as soon **moody to be**¹³ moved.

BENVOLIO And what to?

MERCUTIO Nay, an there were **two**¹⁵ such, we should have none shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou? Why, thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for nicking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes: what eye but such an eye would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat, and yet thy head hath been beaten as **addle**²² as an egg for quarrelling: thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun: didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new **doublet** before **Easter**?²⁶ With

other for tying his new shoes with old ribbon. And yet
ou wilt tutor me **from**²⁸ quarrelling?

ENVOLIO An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man
ould buy the **fee-simple** of my life **for an hour and a**³⁰
arter.

RCUTIO The **fee-simple?**³² O, simple!

Enter Tybalt, Petruchio and others

ENVOLIO By my head, here comes the Capulets.

RCUTIO By my heel, I care not.

To his companions

BALT Follow me close, for I will speak to them.—

entlemen, good e'en, a word with one of you.

RCUTIO And but one word with one of us? Couple it with
omething, make it a word and a blow.

BALT You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, an you will
ve me occasion.

RCUTIO Could you not take some occasion without giving?

BALT Mercutio, thou **consort'st**⁴² with Romeo—

RCUTIO Consort? What, dost thou make us **minstrels?**⁴³ An
ou make minstrels of us, **look**⁴⁴ to hear nothing but

Points to his sword

scords. Here's my fiddlestick, here's that shall
ake you dance. Come, consort!

ENVOLIO We talk here in the public haunt of men:

ther withdraw unto some private place,

reason **coldly**⁴⁹ of your grievances,

else depart: here all eyes gaze on us.

RCUTIO Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze:

vill not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

Enter Romeo

BALT Well, peace be with you, sir, here comes my man.

MERCUTIO But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear *your livery*.⁵⁴

arry, *go before to field*, he'll be your *follower*⁵⁵:

our worship in that sense may call him 'man'.

BALT Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford

o better term than this: thou art a villain.

MERCUTIO Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee

oth much *excuse the appertaining rage*⁶⁰

o such a greeting: villain am I none;

erefore farewell, I see thou know'st me not.

BALT Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries

hat thou hast done me: therefore turn and draw.

MERCUTIO I do protest I never injured thee,

it love thee better than thou canst *devise*⁶⁶,

ll thou shalt know the reason of my love:

nd so, good Capulet — which name I *tender*⁶⁸

o dearly as my own — be satisfied.

MERCUTIO O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!

la stoccado carries it away.⁷¹

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, *will you walk?*⁷²

Draws his sword

BALT What wouldst thou have with me?

MERCUTIO Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine

res that I mean to *make bold withal*, and *as you shall use*⁷⁵

e hereafter, *dry-beat*⁷⁶ the rest of the eight. Will you pluck

our sword out of his *pilcher*⁷⁷ by the ears? Make haste, lest

ine be about your ears ere it be out.

BALT I am for you.

Draws

MERCUTIO Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

MERCUTIO Come, sir, your *passado*.⁸¹

They fight

MEO Draw, Benvolio, beat down their weapons.—
Gentlemen, for shame, *forbear*⁸³ this outrage!

Tries to part them

Tybalt, Mercutio, the prince expressly hath
forbidden *bandying*⁸⁵ in Verona streets:
*Hold*⁸⁶, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

Tybalt stabs Mercutio

Exit Tybalt

MERCUTIO I am hurt.

A plague o'both the houses! I am *sped*.⁸⁸

He gone and hath nothing?

BENVOLIO What, art thou hurt?

MERCUTIO Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch, marry, 'tis enough.

Where is my page? Go, *villain*⁹², fetch a surgeon.

[Exit Page]

MEO Courage, man, the hurt cannot be much.

MERCUTIO No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church
door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me tomorrow, and
you shall find me a *grave* man. I am *peppered*⁹⁶, I warrant,
for this world. A plague o'both your houses! What? A dog, a
cat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! A braggart,
a rogue, a villain, that fights *by the book of arithmetic*⁹⁹—

To Romeo

Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt
under your arm.

MEO I thought all for the best.

MERCUTIO Help me into some house, Benvolio,
for I shall faint. A plague o'both your houses!
You have made worms' meat of me. I have it,

and soundly too. Your houses!

Exeunt

Benvolio helping Mercutio

MEO This gentleman, the prince's near ally¹⁰⁷,
my very¹⁰⁸ friend, hath got his mortal hurt
my behalf: my reputation stained
with Tybalt's slander — Tybalt, that an hour
ago hath been my cousin. O sweet Juliet,
thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
and in my temper¹¹³ softened valour's steel!

Enter Benvolio

BVOLIO O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead!
That gallant spirit hath aspired¹¹⁵ the clouds,
which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

MEO This day's black fate on more days doth depend¹¹⁷,
which but begins the woe others¹¹⁸ must end.

Enter Tybalt

BVOLIO Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

MEO He gone in triumph and Mercutio slain?
Away to heaven, respective lenity¹²¹,
and fire and fury be my conduct¹²² now!
Now, Tybalt, take the 'villain' back again,
that late thou gav'st me, for Mercutio's soul
is but a little way above our heads,
waiting for thine to keep him company:
Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.

BALT Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort¹²⁸ him here,
dost lie with him hence.

MEO This¹³⁰ shall determine that.

They fight. Tybalt falls

BVOLIO Romeo, away, begone!

the citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.

and not **amazed**: the prince will **doom**¹³³ thee death,
thou art taken. Hence, begone, away!

MELO O, I am fortune's **fool**!¹³⁵

BENVOLIO Why dost thou stay?

Exit Romeo

Enter Citizens

CITIZEN Which way ran he that killed Mercutio?

Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

BENVOLIO There lies that Tybalt.

CITIZEN Up, sir, go with me:

Charge¹⁴¹ thee in the prince's name, obey.

Enter Prince, Old Montague, Capulet, their Wives and all

PRINCE Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

BENVOLIO O, noble prince, I can **discover**¹⁴³ all

the **unlucky manage** of this **fatal**¹⁴⁴ brawl:

here lies the man, slain by young Romeo,

that slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

OLD CAPULET Tybalt, my **cousin**?¹⁴⁷ O my brother's child!

prince! O cousin! Husband! O, the blood is spilled

of my dear kinsman! Prince, as thou art true,

thou blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.

My cousin, cousin!

PRINCE Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

BENVOLIO Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.

Romeo that spoke him fair, bid him bethink

how **nice** the quarrel was, and urged **withal**¹⁵⁵

under our high displeasure: all this uttered

with gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed,

would not **take truce** with the unruly **spleen**¹⁵⁸

Tybalt, deaf to peace, but that he **tilts**¹⁵⁹
with piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,
ho, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
and with a martial scorn, **with one hand beats**¹⁶²
old death aside, and with the other sends
back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
distorts¹⁶⁵ it. Romeo he cries aloud,
old, friends! Friends, part!' and swifter than his tongue,
his agile arm beats down their fatal points,
and 'twixt them rushes, underneath whose arm
a **venious**¹⁶⁹ thrust from Tybalt hit the life
of **stout**¹⁷⁰ Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled.
But **by and by**¹⁷¹ comes back to Romeo,
who had but newly entertained revenge,
and to't they go like lightning, for, ere I
could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain.
And as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

PRINCE OF CAPULET He is a kinsman to the Montague,
affection¹⁷⁸ makes him false, he speaks not true:
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,
and all those twenty could but kill one life.
I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give:
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

PRINCE Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio:
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

MONTAGUE Not Romeo, prince, he was Mercutio's friend:
His fault concludes but what the law should end,
The life of Tybalt.

PRINCE And for that offence
Immediately we do exile him hence.

have an **interest** in your hearts' **proceeding**¹⁹⁰,
by **blood**¹⁹¹ for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding:
it I'll **amerce**¹⁹² you with so strong a fine
that you shall all repent the loss of mine.
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses,
nor tears nor prayers shall **purchase out abuses**¹⁹⁵:
therefore use none. Let Romeo hence in haste,
else, when he is found, that hour is his last.
Henceforth hence this body and attend our will:
Mercy but murders, **pardoning those that kill.**¹⁹⁹

Exeunt

[Act 3 Scene 2]

running scene 11

Enter Juliet alone

LET Gallop **apace**¹, you fiery-footed steeds,
towards **Phoebus' lodging**²: such a wagoner
as **Phaethon**³ would whip you to the west,
would bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy **close**⁵ curtain, love-performing night,
that **runaway's** eyes may **wink**⁶ and Romeo
dash through to these arms, untalked of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
to their own beauties, or if love be blind,
it best agrees with night. Come, **civil**¹⁰ night,
be my lovely sober-suited matron all in black,
and **learn** me how to **lose a winning match**¹²,
and bid me play for a pair of stainless **maidenhoods**¹³:
O, good my **unmanned** blood, **bating**¹⁴ in my cheeks,
conceal me with thy black mantle, till **strange**¹⁵ love grow bold,
till true love acted simple modesty.

ome night, come Romeo, come thou day in night,
r thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
hiter than new snow upon a raven's back.

ome, gentle night, come, loving, black-browed night,
ve me my Romeo, and when I shall [die](#)²¹,
ke him and cut him out in little stars,
id he will make the face of heaven so fine
at all the world will be in love with night
id pay no worship to the garish sun.

I have bought the mansion of a love,
it not [possessed](#)²⁷ it, and though I am sold,
ot yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day
is the night before some festival

o an impatient child that hath new robes
id may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,

Enter Nurse, with cords

id she brings news, and every tongue that speaks
it Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.—

ow, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? The cords
at Romeo bid thee fetch?

NURSE Ay, ay, the cords.

Drops the cords

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

NURSE Ah, [welladay!](#)³⁸ He's dead, he's dead, he's dead!

e are [undone](#)³⁹, lady, we are undone.

ack the day, he's gone, he's killed, he's dead!

LIET Can heaven be so [envious?](#)⁴¹

NURSE Romeo can,

ough heaven cannot: O Romeo, Romeo!

hoever would have thought it? Romeo!

LIET What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?

his torture should be roared in dismal hell.
With Romeo slain himself? Say thou but 'Ay',
And that bare vowel 'I' shall poison more
Than the death-darting eye of [cockatrice](#)⁴⁹:
I am not I, if there be such an ay,
Or [those eyes shut](#)⁵¹, that makes thee answer 'Ay'.
If he be slain, say 'Ay', or if not, 'No':
Brief sounds determine of my [weal](#)⁵³ or woe.
RSE I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes —

Points

[And save the mark!](#)⁵⁵ — here on his manly breast:
Piteous corpse, a bloody piteous corpse;
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood,
All in [gore-blood](#)⁵⁸: I swoonèd at the sight.
LIET O, [break](#)⁵⁹, my heart, poor bankrupt, break at once!
To prison, eyes, ne'er look on liberty!

[Leave earth](#), to earth [resign](#), end [motion](#)⁶¹ here,
And thou and Romeo press one heavy [bier!](#)⁶²

RSE O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!
Courteous Tybalt, honest gentleman,
What ever I should live to see thee dead!

LIET What storm is this that blows so contrary?
Romeo slaughtered, and is Tybalt dead,
My dearest cousin, and my dearer [lord?](#)⁶⁸
Hear, dreadful [trumpet](#)⁶⁹, sound the general doom,
For who is living, if those two are gone?

RSE Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banishèd,
Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd.

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

RSE It did, it did, alas the day, it did!

LIET O serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!

d ever dragon [keep](#)⁷⁶ so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical,
Downe-feathered raven, wolvish-ravening lamb,
Dispisèd substance of divinest show!

[st](#)⁸⁰ opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
Damenèd saint, an honourable villain!
In nature, what hadst thou to do in hell,
When thou didst [bower](#)⁸³ the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter
So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!

RSE There's no trust,
No faith, no honesty in men: all perjured,
All forsworn, all naught, all [dissemblers](#).⁹⁰
O, where's my man? Give me some [aqua vitae](#)⁹¹:
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.
O, come come to Romeo!

LIET Blistered be thy tongue
For such a wish! He was not born to shame:
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crowned
The monarch of the universal earth.

What a beast was I to chide at him!

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

LIET Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?

O, [poor my lord](#)¹⁰², what tongue shall smooth thy name,
When I, thy three-hours' wife, have mangled it?
But wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?—
That villain cousin would have killed my husband.
O, back, foolish tears, back to your native spring,

our tributary¹⁰⁷ drops belong to woe,
which you mistaking offer up to joy.
My husband lives that Tybalt would have slain,
and Tybalt dead that would have slain my husband:
Is this comfort, wherefore weep I then?
The word there was, worsè than Tybalt's death,
that murdered me. I would forget it fain,
but, O, it presses to my memory,
like damnèd guilty deeds to sinners' minds:
'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo banishèd.'
That 'banishèd', that one word 'banishèd',
is worth a thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death
was woe enough if it had ended there:
But if sour woe delights in fellowship
and needly will be ranked¹²¹ with other griefs,
why followed not, when she said 'Tybalt's dead',
'My father, or thy mother'¹²³, nay, or both,
which modern lamentation might have moved?¹²⁴
To say with a rearward¹²⁵ following Tybalt's death,
'Romeo is banishèd': to speak that word,
father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
all slain, all dead. 'Romeo is banishèd'!
There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
that word's death: no words can that woe sound.¹³⁰
Where is my father and my mother, nurse?
NURSE Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corpse.
Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.
JULIET Wash they his wounds with tears: mine shall be spent,
when theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.
Take up those cords.— Poor ropes, you are beguiled¹³⁶,
both you and I, for Romeo is exiled:

He made you for a highway to my bed,
But I, a maid, die maiden-widowèd.
Come cord, come nurse, I'll to my wedding-bed,
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

NURSE Hie to your chamber, I'll find Romeo
To comfort you: I wot¹⁴³ well where he is.
Mark ye, your Romeo will be here at night.
I'll to him, he is hid at Laurence' cell.

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

Exeunt

[Act 3 Scene 3]

running scene 12

Romeo hesitating

Enter Friar and Romeo

FRIAR LAURENCE Romeo, come forth, come forth, thou fearful¹ man:
Fiction is enamoured of thy parts²,
And thou art wedded to calamity.

ROMEO Father, what news? What is the prince's doom?⁴
That sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand,
That I yet know not?

FRIAR LAURENCE Too familiar
With my dear son with such sour company:
Bring thee tidings of the prince's doom.

ROMEO What less than doomsday¹⁰ is the prince's doom?

FRIAR LAURENCE A gentler judgement vanished¹¹ from his lips:
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

ROMEO Ha, banishment? Be merciful, say 'death',
For exile hath more terror in his look,

uch more than death. Do not say 'banishment'.

LEAR LAURENCE Here from Verona art thou banishèd.

Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

ROMEO There is no world [without](#)¹⁸ Verona walls,
it purgatory, torture, hell itself.

[Once banishèd](#)²⁰ is banished from the world,
and [world's exile](#)²¹ is death: then banishèd,
death mistermed. Calling death banishèd,
thou cutt'st my head off with a golden axe,
and smil'st upon the stroke that murders me.

LEAR LAURENCE O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!

[By fault our law calls death](#)²⁶, but the kind prince,
taking thy part, hath [rushed](#)²⁷ aside the law,
and turned that black word 'death' to 'banishment'.
This is dear mercy, and thou see'st it not.

ROMEO 'Tis torture and not mercy. Heaven is here,
here Juliet lives, and every cat and dog
and little mouse, every unworthy thing,
live here in heaven and may look on her,
but Romeo may not. More [validity](#)³⁴,
more honourable state, more [courtship](#)³⁵ lives
[carrion-flies](#)³⁶ than Romeo: they may seize
on the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand
and steal immortal blessing from her lips,
who even in pure and [vestal](#)³⁹ modesty,
will blush, as thinking [their own kisses](#)⁴⁰ sin.
This may flies do, when I from this must fly —
and say'st thou yet that exile is not death? —
but Romeo may not: he is banishèd.

Andst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
no sudden [mean](#) of death, though ne'er so [mean](#)⁴⁵,

it 'banishèd'⁴⁶ to kill me? 'Banishèd'?
friar, the damnèd use that word in hell,
howling attends it: how hast thou the heart,
being a *divine*⁴⁹, a ghostly confessor,
sin-absolver, and my friend professed,
to mangle me with that word 'banishèd'?

LIAR LAURENCE Then, *fond*⁵² mad man, hear me a little speak.

ROMEO O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

LIAR LAURENCE I'll give thee armour to keep off that word:

University's sweet milk, philosophy,
to comfort thee, though thou art banishèd.

ROMEO Yet 'banishèd'? *Hang up*⁵⁷ philosophy!

Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
*splant*⁵⁹ a town, reverse a prince's doom,
helps not, it prevails not: talk no more.

LIAR LAURENCE O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

ROMEO How should they, when wise men have no eyes?

LIAR LAURENCE Let me *dispute* with thee of thy *estate*.⁶³

ROMEO Thou canst not speak of *that*⁶⁴ thou dost not feel:

Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,
*outing*⁶⁷ like me and like me banishèd,
Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,
And fall upon the ground as I do now,
Making the measure of an unmade grave.

Enter Nurse and knocks

From the other side of a door

LIAR LAURENCE Arise, one knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.

ROMEO Not I, unless the breath of heartsick groans,
Dist-like, enfold me from the search of eyes.

Knock

Romeo remains on the floor

LAR LAURENCE Hark, how they knock!— Who's there?— Romeo, arise,
you wilt be [taken](#).⁷⁵— Stay awhile!— Stand up,
Knock

Romeo does not move

in to my study.— By and by!— God's will,
that [simpleness](#)⁷⁷ is this?— I come, I come!
Knock

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

From the other side of the door

RSE Let me come in, and you shall know my errand:
I come from Lady Juliet.

LAR LAURENCE Welcome, then.

RSE O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,
where's my lady's lord? Where's Romeo?

LAR LAURENCE There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

RSE O, he is [even](#) in my mistress' [case](#)⁸⁵,
just in her case. O, woeful [sympathy](#)!⁸⁶
piteous predicament! Even so lies she,
blubb'ring and weeping, weeping and blubb'ring.
[And](#) up, stand up, stand, [an](#)⁸⁹ you be a man:
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand.
Why should you fall into so deep an [O](#)?⁹¹

MEO Nurse!

RSE Ah sir, ah sir! [Death](#)⁹³'s the end of all.

MEO Speak'st thou of Juliet? How is it with her?
Doth not she think me an [old](#)⁹⁵ murderer,
How I have stained the childhood of our joy
With blood removed but little from her own?
Where is she? And how doth she? And what says

y concealed lady to our [cancelled](#)⁹⁹ love?

ROSE O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,
and now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
and Tybalt calls, and then [on Romeo cries](#)¹⁰²,
and then down falls again.

ROMEO As if that name,
not from the deadly [level](#)¹⁰⁵ of a gun,
had murder her, as that name's cursèd hand
murdered her kinsman. O, tell me, friar, tell me,
what vile part of this anatomy
doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may [sack](#)¹⁰⁹

Draws his sword

the hateful mansion.

FRIAR LAURENCE Hold thy desperate hand.
Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art:
thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
the unreasonable fury of a beast.
Unseemly woman in a seeming man,
and ill-beseeming beast in seeming both,
thou hast amazed me. By my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better [tempered](#).¹¹⁸
Wilt thou slay Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself?
Wilt thou slay thy lady that in thy life lives,
or doing damnèd hate upon thyself?
Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven and earth?
Once birth, and [heaven, and earth](#)¹²³, all three do meet
thee at once, which thou at once wouldst lose.
O, fie, thou sham'st thy shape, thy love, thy [wit](#)¹²⁵,
[which](#) like a [usurer](#)¹²⁶ abound'st in all,
and usest none [in that true use](#)¹²⁷ indeed
which should [bedeck](#) thy [shape](#)¹²⁸, thy love, thy wit.

thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
glossing from the [valour](#)¹³⁰ of a man:
thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,
betraying that love which thou hast vowed to cherish:
thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
mishapen in the [conduct](#)¹³⁴ of them both,
like [powder](#) in a skillless soldier's [flask](#)¹³⁵,
set afire by thine own ignorance,
would thou [dismembered with thine own defence](#).¹³⁷
O hat, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive,
for whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead:
where art thou [happy](#).¹⁴⁰ Tybalt would kill thee,
hadst thou slew'd Tybalt: there art thou happy.
The law that threatened death became thy friend
and turned it to exile: there art thou happy.
A pack of blessings light upon thy back,
happiness courts thee in her best [array](#)¹⁴⁵,
not like a [mishapen](#)¹⁴⁶ and sullen wench,
who pouts upon thy fortune and thy love:
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
O, get thee to thy love as was [decreed](#)¹⁴⁹,
ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her:
but look thou stay not till the [watch be set](#)¹⁵¹,
for then thou canst not pass to Mantua,
where thou shalt live till we can find a time
to [blaze](#) your marriage, reconcile your [friends](#)¹⁵⁴,
beg pardon of thy prince, and call thee back
with twenty hundred thousand times more joy
than thou went'st forth in lamentation.—
O before, nurse, commend me to thy lady,
and bid her hasten all the house to bed,

hich heavy sorrow makes them [apt unto](#)¹⁶⁰:

meo is coming.

FRSE O Lord, I could have stayed here all night

to hear good counsel. O, what learning is!—

My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

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

FRSE Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir:

Give you, make haste, for it grows very late.

[Exit]

MEO How well my comfort is revived by this!

FIAR LAURENCE Go hence, goodnight, and [here stands all your state](#)¹⁶⁹:

Let her be gone before the watch be set,

to go by the break of day disguised from hence.

I'll go to Mantua: I'll find out your man,

and he shall [signify](#)¹⁷³ from time to time

of every [good hap](#)¹⁷⁴ to you that chances here.

Give me thy hand, 'tis late. Farewell, goodnight.

MEO But that a joy past joy calls out on me,

and were a grief, so [brief](#)¹⁷⁷ to part with thee. Farewell.

Exeunt

[Act 3 Scene 4]

running scene 13

Enter Old Capulet, his Wife and Paris

CAPULET Things have fall'n out, sir, so unluckily

that we have had no time to [move](#)² our daughter:

and look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,

and so did I.— Well, we were born to die.

It is very late, she'll not come down tonight.

I'll promise you, but for your company,

would have been abed an hour ago.

RIS These times of woe afford no times to woo.

adam, goodnight, commend me to your daughter.

DY CAPULET I will, and know her mind early tomorrow:

might she is [mewed up to her heaviness](#).¹¹

PULET Sir Paris, I will make a [desperate tender](#)¹²

of my child's love: I think she will be ruled

in all respects by me, nay, more, I doubt it not.—

Go to bed, wife, go you to her ere you go to bed,

acquaint her here of my [son](#)¹⁶ Paris' love,

and bid her, [mark you me](#)¹⁷, on Wednesday next —

What day is it, soft, what day is this?

RIS Monday, my lord,

PULET Monday? Ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon,

Thursday let it be: o'Thursday, tell her,

we shall be married to this noble earl.

Will you be ready? Do you like this haste?

We'll keep no great [ado](#)²⁴ — a friend or two,

or hark you, Tybalt being slain so [late](#)²⁵,

may be thought we [held him carelessly](#)²⁶,

leaving our kinsman, if we revel much:

Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,

and there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

RIS My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

PULET Well get you gone: o'Thursday be it, then.—

To Lady Capulet

Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed,

prepare her, wife, [against](#)³³ this wedding day.—

Goodwell, my lord. Light to my chamber, ho!

[Fare me!](#)³⁵ It is so very late,

that we may call it early by and by.

Goodnight.

Exeunt

[Act 3 Scene 5]

running scene 14

Enter Romeo and Juliet aloft

LIET Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Softly she sings on yon pom'granate tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

MEO It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what [envious](#)⁷ streaks
Do lace the [severing](#)⁸ clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and [jocund](#)⁹ day
Trips and tiptoe on the misty mountains tops.
Night must be gone and live or stay and die.

LIET Yon light is not daylight, I know it, I:
It is some [meteor that the sun exhales](#)¹³,
To be to thee this night a torchbearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua.
Therefore stay yet: thou need'st not to be gone.

MEO Let me be [ta'en](#)¹⁷, let me be put to death,
I am content, [so thou](#)¹⁸ wilt have it so.
I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,
It is but the pale [reflex](#) of [Cynthia](#)²⁰'s brow,
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The [vaulty](#)²² heaven so high above our heads.
I have more [care](#)²³ to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
How is't, my soul? Let's talk, it is not day.

LIET It is, it is: [hie](#)²⁶ hence, begone, away!
is the lark that sings so out of tune,
[raining](#)²⁸ harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
me say the lark makes sweet [division](#)²⁹;
is doth not so, for she divideth us:
me say the lark and loathèd toad [change](#)³¹ eyes,
now I would they had changed voices too,
nce [arm from arm](#) that voice doth us [affray](#)³³,
inting thee hence with [hunt's-up](#)³⁴ to the day.
now begone, more light and light it grows.
MEO More light and light, more dark and dark our woes!

Enter Nurse

NURSE Madam!

LIET Nurse?

NURSE Your lady mother is coming to your chamber:
the day is broke, be wary, look about.

[Exit]

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

MEO Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend.

LIET Art thou gone so? Love, lord, ay, husband, [friend](#)⁴³,
must hear from thee every day in the hour,
for in a minute there are many days.

by this count I shall be [much in years](#)⁴⁶
before I again behold my Romeo!

MEO Farewell!

will omit no opportunity
that may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

LIET O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

MEO I doubt it not, and all these woes shall serve
for sweet discourses in our time to come.

LIET O God, I have an *ill-divining*⁵⁴ soul!

ethinks I see thee, now thou art so low,

one dead in the bottom of a tomb:

ther my eyesight fails or thou look'st pale.

MEO And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:

*y*⁵⁹ sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu!

Exit

LIET O fortune, fortune, all men call thee fickle:

thou art fickle, what dost thou with him.

hat is renowned for faith? Be fickle, fortune,

r then I hope thou wilt not keep him long,

it send him back.

Enter Mother

Below

DY CAPULET Ho, daughter, are you up?

LIET Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.

she *not down so late*⁶⁷, or up so early?

hat unaccustomed cause *procures*⁶⁸ her hither?

Juliet could exit aloft and enter below

DY CAPULET Why, how now, Juliet!

LIET Madam, I am not well.

DY CAPULET Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?

hat, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?

*Canst thou*⁷³ if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live:

erefore, have done. Some grief shows much of love,

it much of grief shows still some want of wit.

LIET Yet let me weep for such a *feeling*⁷⁶ loss.

DY CAPULET So shall you *feel*⁷⁷ the loss, but not the friend

hich you weep for.

LIET Feeling so the loss,

cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

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

LIET What villain, madam?

DY CAPULET That same villain, Romeo.

Aside?

LIET Villain and he be many miles asunder.—

God pardon him! I do with all my heart:

and yet no man like he doth grieve⁸⁷ my heart.

DY CAPULET That is because the traitor lives.

LIET Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands:

would none but I might venge my cousin's death!

DY CAPULET We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not:

when weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,

where that same banished runagate⁹³ doth live,

shall give him such an unaccustomed dram⁹⁴,

that he shall soon keep Tybalt company,

and then I hope, thou wilt be satisfied.

LIET Indeed, I never shall be satisfied⁹⁷

with Romeo, till I behold him — dead⁹⁸ —

my poor heart so for a kinsman⁹⁹ vexed.

Madam, if you could find out but a man

to bear a poison, I would temper¹⁰¹ it,

that Romeo should upon receipt thereof,

fall on sleep in quiet.¹⁰³ O, how my heart abhors

to hear him named and cannot come to him,

to wreak¹⁰⁵ the love I bore my cousin

upon his body that hath slaughtered him!

DY CAPULET Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.

It now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

LIET And joy comes well in such a needy¹⁰⁹ time:

What are they, beseech your ladyship?

FRANCISCA Well, well, thou hast a **careful**¹¹¹ father, child,
the who, to put thee from thy heaviness,
with **sorted out**¹¹³ a sudden day of joy,
that thou expects not, nor I **looked not for**.¹¹⁴

ANNE Madam, **in happy time**¹¹⁵, what day is that?

FRANCISCA **Marry**¹¹⁶, my child, early next Thursday morn,
the gallant, young and noble gentleman,
the County Paris, at St Peter's Church,
shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

ANNE Now, by St Peter's Church and Peter too,
I shall not make me there a joyful bride.

I wonder at this haste, that I must wed
ere he that should be husband comes to woo.

Pray you tell my lord and father, madam,
I will not marry yet, and, when I do, I swear
I shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
rather than Paris. These are news indeed!

FRANCISCA Here comes your father: tell him so yourself,
I would see how he will take it at your hands.

Enter Capulet and Nurse

FRANCISCA When the sun sets, the earth doth drizzle dew,
but for the sunset of my brother's son
it rains downright.

How now? A **conduit**¹³³, girl? What, still in tears?

Perchance to show'ring? In one little body
thou **counterfeits** a **bark**¹³⁵, a sea, a wind,
or still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
do ebb and flow with tears: the bark thy body is,
tilting in this salt **flood**¹³⁸: the winds, thy sighs,
then, raging with thy tears and they with them,

without a sudden calm, will [overset](#)¹⁴⁰

thy tempest-tossèd body. How now, wife?

Have you delivered to her our decree?

OLD CAPULET Ay, sir, but she will none, she gives you thanks.

[Would](#)¹⁴⁴ the fool were married to her grave.

OLD CAPULET Soft, [take me with you, take me with you](#)¹⁴⁵, wife.

[How](#)¹⁴⁶, will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?

Doth she not proud? Doth she not count [her](#)¹⁴⁷ blest,

unworthy as she is, that we have [wrought](#)¹⁴⁸

unworthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

OLD CAPULET Not proud you have, but thankful that you have:

How could I never be of what I hate,

but thankful even for [hate, that is meant love](#).¹⁵²

OLD CAPULET How now? How now? [Chopped-logic?](#)¹⁵³ What is this?

'Proud' and 'I thank you' and 'I thank you not',

and yet 'not proud', mistress minion you?

Thank me no thankings nor proud me no prouds,

but [fettle](#)¹⁵⁷ your fine joints gainst Thursday next,

to go with Paris to St Peter's Church,

for I will drag thee on a [hurdle](#)¹⁵⁹ thither.

[Out](#), you [green-sickness carrion](#)¹⁶⁰, out, you baggage,

you [tallow-face!](#)¹⁶¹

OLD CAPULET Fie, fie, what, are you mad?

Kneels

OLD CAPULET Good father, I beseech you on my knees,

hear me with patience but to speak a word.

OLD CAPULET Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!

Tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,

for never after look me in the face.

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me:

by thy fingers [itch](#).¹⁶⁹ Wife, we scarce thought us blest

What God had lent us but this only child,
It now I see this one is one too much,
And that we have a curse in having her.
Put it on her, [hilding!](#)¹⁷³

NURSE God in heaven bless her!
You are to blame, my lord, to [rate](#)¹⁷⁵ her so.

To Nurse

CAPULET And why, my lady wisdom? Hold your tongue,
Good prudence, [smatter](#) with your [gossips](#)¹⁷⁷, go.

NURSE I speak no treason.

CAPULET O, [God gi' good e'en.](#)¹⁷⁹

NURSE May not one speak?

CAPULET Peace, you mumbling fool!
Tear your [gravity](#) o'er a gossip's [bowl](#)¹⁸²,
For here we need it not.

OLD CAPULET You are too hot.

CAPULET [God's bread](#)¹⁸⁵, it makes me mad!
By day, night, hour, tide, time, work, play,
I can see none in company, [still](#)¹⁸⁷ my care hath been
To have her matched: and having now provided
A gentleman of noble parentage,
Of fair [demesnes](#)¹⁹⁰, youthful, and nobly allied,
Well furnished, as they say, with honourable [parts](#)¹⁹¹,
Well proportioned as one's thought would wish a man,
And then to have a wretched [puling](#)¹⁹³ fool,
Whining [mammet](#), [in her fortune's tender](#)¹⁹⁴,
To answer 'I'll not wed, I cannot love,
I am too young, I pray you pardon me.'
If you will not wed, I'll [pardon](#)¹⁹⁷ you:
Nay, where you will you shall not house with me.
Look to't, think on't, I [do not use to jest.](#)¹⁹⁹

Thursday is near, lay hand on heart, [advise](#)²⁰⁰:
If you be mine, I'll give you to my friend,
If you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.
Trust to't, bethink you, I'll not [be forsworn](#).²⁰⁵

Exit

LIET Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O sweet my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage for a month, a week,
Or if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim [monument](#)²¹¹ where Tybalt lies.

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

Exit

LIET O God!— O nurse, how shall this be prevented?
My husband is on earth, my [faith](#)²¹⁵ in heaven:
How shall that faith return again to earth,
Unless that husband send it me from heaven
After leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me.
Alack, alack, that heaven should [practise](#)²¹⁹ stratagems
Upon so soft a subject as myself!
What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?
Give me comfort, nurse.

NURSE Faith, here it is:
 Romeo is banished, and [all the world to nothing](#)²²⁴,
 That he dares ne'er come back to [challenge](#)²²⁵ you,
 Or if he do, it needs must be by stealth.
 Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,
 Think it best you married with the county.

he's a lovely gentleman!
omeo's a [dishclout](#)²³⁰ to him. An eagle, madam,
hath not so green, so [quick](#)²³¹, so fair an eye
Paris hath. [Beshrew](#)²³² my very heart,
think you are happy in this second match,
or it excels your first: or if it did not,
your first is dead, or 'twere as good he were,
living here and you no [use](#)²³⁶ of him.

LIET Speakest thou from thy heart?

RSE And from my soul too,
else beshrew them both.

LIET [Amen.](#)²⁴⁰

RSE What?

LIET Well, thou hast comforted me marv'llous much.
Go in and tell my lady I am gone,
having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,
to make confession and to be absolved.

RSE Marry, I will, and this is wisely done.

[Exit]

LIET [Ancient damnation!](#)²⁴⁷ O most wicked fiend!
It more sin to wish me thus [forsworn](#)²⁴⁸,
to dispraise my lord with that same tongue
which she hath praised him with above compare
many thousand times? Go, counsellor,
you and my [bosom](#) henceforth shall be [twain](#).²⁵²
I'll to the friar, to know his remedy:
If all else fail, myself have power to die.

Exit

[Act 4 Scene 1]

Enter Friar and County Paris

FIAR LAURENCE On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

RIS My father Capulet will have it so,
and I am **nothing slow**³ to slack his haste.

FIAR LAURENCE You say you do not know the lady's **mind**?⁴
Even is the course, I like it not.

RIS Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,
and therefore have I little talk of love,
for **Venus** smiles not in a **house**⁸ of tears.

Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous
that she doth give her sorrow so much **sway**¹⁰,
and in his wisdom hastes our marriage,
to stop the inundation of her tears,
which too much **minded**¹³ by herself alone
may be put from her by **society**¹⁴:
Now do you know the reason of this haste.

Aside

FIAR LAURENCE I would I knew not why it should be slowed.—
Now, sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

Enter Juliet

RIS **Happily**¹⁸ met, my lady and my wife!

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

RIS That 'may be' must be, love, on Thursday next.

LIET What must be shall be.

FIAR LAURENCE That's a certain **text**.²²

RIS Come you to make confession to this father?

LIET To answer that, I should confess to you.

RIS Do not deny to him that you love me.

LIET I will confess to you that I love him.

RIS So will ye, I am sure, that you love me.

LIET If I do so, it will be of more [price](#)²⁸,

ing spoke behind your back, than to your face.

RIS Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.

LIET The tears have got small victory by that,

r it was bad enough before their spite.

RIS Thou wrong'st it more than tears with that report.

LIET That is no slander, sir, which is a truth,

nd what I spake, I spake it to [my face](#).³⁵

RIS Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it.

LIET It may be so, for it is [not mine own](#).³⁷—

e you at leisure, holy father, now,

: shall I come to you at evening mass?

IAR LAURENCE My leisure serves me, [pensive](#)⁴⁰ daughter, now.—

y lord, we must entreat the time alone.

RIS God [shield](#)⁴² I should disturb devotion!

liet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye:

ll then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss.

Kisses Juliet on forehead or hand or cheek

Exit Paris

LIET O, shut the door, and when thou hast done so,

me weep with me, past hope, past care, past help!

IAR LAURENCE O, Juliet, I already know thy grief,

strains me past the [compass](#)⁴⁸ of my wits:

ear thou must, and nothing may [prorogue](#)⁴⁹ it,

1 Thursday next be married to this county.

LIET Tell me not, friar, that thou hearest of this,

less thou tell me how I may prevent it:

in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,

o thou but call my resolution wise,

nd with this knife I'll help it [presently](#).⁵⁵

And joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands,
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo sealed,
Shall be the label to another deed⁵⁸,
To my true heart with treacherous revolt
Turn to another, this shall slay them both⁶⁰:
Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time⁶¹,
Give me some present counsel, or, behold,
Twixt my extremes⁶³ and me this bloody knife
Shall play the umpire⁶⁴, arbitrating that
Which the commission of thy years and art⁶⁵
Should to no issue⁶⁶ of true honour bring.
I am not so long to speak, I long to die,
What thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

LAR LAURENCE Hold, daughter: I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desp'rate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent.
I rather than to marry County Paris,
Whom thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,
Wilt thou be likely thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,
That cop'st⁷⁶ with death himself to scape from it:
And if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

LIIET O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of any tower,
Or walk in thievish ways⁸⁰, or bid me lurk
Where serpents are, chain me with roaring bears,
Or hide me nightly in a charnel-house⁸²,
Over-covered quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless⁸⁴ skulls,
Or bid me go into a new-made grave

and hide me with a dead man in his tomb —
things that to hear them told have made me tremble —
and I will do it without fear or doubt,
to live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

PAR LAURENCE Hold, then. Go home, be merry, give consent
to marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow:
tomorrow night look that thou lie alone,
that not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber:

Shows a vial

Take thou this vial, being then in bed,
and this [distilling liquor](#) drink thou [off](#)⁹⁵,
when presently through all thy veins shall run
cold and drowsy [humour](#)⁹⁷, for no pulse
shall keep his [native](#) progress, but [surcease](#).⁹⁸
No warmth, no breath shall testify thou liv'st:
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
to [wanny](#) ashes, thy [eyes' windows](#)¹⁰¹ fall,
like death when he shuts up the day of life.
Each part, deprived of [supple government](#)¹⁰³,
shall stiff and stark and cold appear like death:
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
thou shalt continue two-and-forty hours,
and then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes
to rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead:
Even as the manner of our country is,
thy best robes uncovered on the bier,
Be borne to burial in thy kindred's grave //
thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault
where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the mean time, [against](#)¹¹⁵ thou shalt awake,

all Romeo by my letters know our [drift](#)¹¹⁶,
and hither shall he come, and he and I
will watch thy waking, and that very night
shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
And this shall free thee from this present shame,
no inconstant [toy](#)¹²¹, nor womanish fear,
I hate thy valour in the acting it.
LIET Give me, give me! O, tell not me of fear!

Takes the vial

FRIAR LAURENCE Hold, get you gone, be strong and [prosperous](#)¹²⁴
with this resolve: I'll send a friar with speed
to Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.
LIET Love give me strength, and strength shall [help afford](#).¹²⁷
I'll neverrewell, dear father!

Exeunt

[\[Act 4 Scene 2\]](#)

running scene 16

Enter Father Capulet, Mother, Nurse and Servingmen, two or three

CAPULET So many guests invite as here are writ.—

[Exit a Servingman]

CAPULET I'll hire twenty [cunning](#)² cooks.

SERVINGMAN You shall have [none ill](#), sir, for I'll [try](#)³ if they can
lick their fingers.

CAPULET How canst thou try them so?

SERVINGMAN Marry, sir, 'tis an [ill cook that cannot lick his own](#)⁶
fingers: therefore he that cannot lick his fingers goes not
with me.

CAPULET Go, begone.

[Exit the Servingman]

e shall be much **unfurnished**¹⁰ for this time.

hat, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

NURSE Ay, **forsooth**.¹²

CAPULET Well, he may chance to do some good on her.

peevish self-willed **harlotry**¹⁴ it is.

Enter Juliet

NURSE See where she comes from shrift with merry look.

CAPULET How now, my headstrong? Where have you been **gadding**?¹⁶

JULIET Where I have learned me to repent the sin

of disobedient opposition

↓Falls prostrate or kneels↓

of you and your **behests**¹⁹, and am enjoined

by holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,

and beg your pardon. Pardon, I beseech you!

Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

CAPULET Send for the county, go tell him of this:

I will have this knot knit up tomorrow morning.

JULIET I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell,

and gave him what **becomèd**²⁶ love I might,

not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

CAPULET Why, I am glad on't, this is well — stand up —

She rises

and this is as't should be. Let me see the county.

Go, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.

Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,

of our whole city is much bound to him.

JULIET Nurse, will you go with me into my **closet**³³,

and help me sort such needful **ornaments**³⁴

as you think fit to furnish me tomorrow?

OLD CAPULET No, not till Thursday: there's time enough.

PULET Go, nurse, go with her: we'll to church tomorrow.

Exeunt Juliet and Nurse

DY CAPULET We shall be **short**³⁸ in our provision,
is now near night.

PULET Tush, I will stir about,
and all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife:
I'll go to Juliet, help to **deck up her**⁴²:
I'll not to bed tonight, let me alone.
I'll play the housewife for this once. What, ho!
My are all **forth**.⁴⁵ Well, I will walk myself
to County Paris, to prepare him up
against tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light,
since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed.

Exeunt Father and Mother

[Act 4 Scene 3]

running scene 17

A curtained bed is provided onstage

Enter Juliet and Nurse

LIET Ay, those attires are best, but, gentle nurse,
I pray thee leave me to myself tonight,
for I have need of many **orisons**³
to move the heavens to smile upon my state,
which, well thou know'st, is **cross**⁵ and full of sin.

Enter Mother

DY CAPULET What, are you busy, ho? Need you my help?

LIET No, madam, we have **culled**⁷ such necessaries
that are **behoveful** for our **state**⁸ tomorrow.
I please you, let me now be left alone,
and let the nurse this night sit up with you,
for I am sure you have your hands full all,

this so sudden business.

DY CAPULET Goodnight.

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

Exeunt [Lady Capulet and Nurse]

LADY CAPULET Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.

I have a faint cold fear **thrills**¹⁶ through my veins,

that almost freezes up the heat of life.

I call them back again to comfort me.—

Nurse!— What should she do here?

By **dismal**²⁰ scene I needs must act alone.

Give me, vial.

What if this mixture do not work at all?

Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?

Lays down a dagger

No, no, this shall forbid it.— Lie thou there.—

What if it be a poison, which the friar

obtrusively²⁶ hath ministered to have me dead,

that in this marriage he should be dishonoured,

because he married me before to Romeo?

Dear me, it is, and yet methinks it should not,

for he hath **still** been **tried**³⁰ a holy man.

Now if, when I am laid into the tomb,

I wake before the time that Romeo

comes to redeem me? There's a fearful point!

Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,

whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,

and there die **strangled ere**³⁶ my Romeo comes?

Or, if I live, is it not very **like**³⁷,

the horrible **conceit**³⁸ of death and night,

together with the terror of the place —

in a vault, an ancient receptacle,

here for these many hundred years the bones
of all my buried ancestors are packed:
here bloody Tybalt, yet but [green in earth](#)⁴³,
as fest'ring in his shroud, where, as they say,
some hours in the night spirits resort —
ack, alack, is it not like that I,
early waking what with loathsome smells,
and shrieks like [mandrakes](#)⁴⁸ torn out of the earth,
that living mortals, hearing them, run mad —
if I wake, shall I not be [distraught](#)⁵⁰,
[vironèd](#)⁵¹ with all these hideous fears?
And madly play with my forefather's joints?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
And in this [rage](#)⁵⁴, with some great kinsman's bone,
dash with a club, dash out my desp'rate brains?
Look! Methinks I see my cousin's ghost
steeking out Romeo that did [spit](#)⁵⁷ his body
upon a rapier's point. [Stay](#)⁵⁸, Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink: I drink to thee.

She drinks and falls onto the bed within the curtains

[Act 4 Scene 4]

running scene 17 continues

Enter Lady of the house and Nurse

LADY CAPULET Hold, take these keys, and fetch more spices, nurse.

NURSE They call for dates and [quinces](#) in the [pastry](#).²

Enter Old Capulet

OLD CAPULET Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock hath crowed,

the [curfew-bell](#)⁴ hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.

Look to the [baked meats](#), good [Angelica](#)⁵:

they are not for cost.

NURSE Go, you [cotquean](#)⁷, go,
set you to bed. Faith, you'll be sick tomorrow
for this night's [watching](#).⁹

CAPULET No, not a whit. What, I have watched ere now
all night for less cause, and ne'er been sick.

LADY CAPULET Ay, you have been a [mouse-hunt](#)¹² in your time,
but I will [watch you from such watching](#)¹³ now.

Exeunt Lady and Nurse

CAPULET [A jealous hood](#)¹⁴, a jealous hood!—

Calls

How fellow, what is there?

Enter three or four with spits, and logs and baskets

SERVINGMAN Things for the cook, sir, but I know not what.

CAPULET Make haste, make haste.—

[Exit Servingman]

Pray, fetch drier logs:

Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

OTHER SERVINGMAN [I have a head, sir, that will find out logs](#)²⁰,
and never trouble Peter for the matter.

[Exit]

CAPULET [Mass](#), and well said, a merry [whoreson](#)²², ha!

Thou shalt be [logger-head](#).²³ Good Father, 'tis day:

Play music

The county will be here with music [straight](#)²⁴,

for so he said he would. I hear him near.—

Nurse! Wife! What, ho! What, Nurse, I say!

Enter Nurse

Go waken Juliet, go and [trim her up](#)²⁷,

and go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,

make haste: the bridegroom he is come already.

ake haste, I say.

[Exit]

RSE Mistress, what, mistress? Juliet?—

Approaches the bed

st³², I warrant her, she.—

hy, lamb, why, lady! Fie, you slug-a-bed!

hy, love, I say, madam, sweetheart, why, bride!

hat, not a word? You **take your pennyworths**³⁵ now,

leep for a week, for the next night, I warrant,

ie County Paris hath **set up his rest**³⁷,

hat you shall rest but little. God forgive me,

arry and amen.— How sound is she asleep!

nust needs wake her. Madam, madam, madam!

r, let the county **take**⁴¹ you in your bed,

e'll **fright**⁴² you up, i'faith. Will it not be?

Draws the curtains

hat, dressed, and in your clothes, and **down**⁴³ again?

nust needs wake you: lady, lady, lady!—

as, alas! Help, help! My lady's dead!

welladay, that ever I was born!

me aqua vitae, ho! My lord! My lady!

Enter Mother

DY CAPULET What noise is here?

RSE O lamentable day!

DY CAPULET What is the matter?

RSE Look, look! O heavy day!

DY CAPULET O me, O me! My child, my only life,

ive, look up, or I will die with thee!

elp, help! Call help.

Enter Father

PULET For shame, bring Juliet forth, her lord is come.

FRSE She's dead, deceased, she's dead, alack the day!

DY CAPULET Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

PULET Ha? Let me see her. *Out, alas*⁵⁸, she's cold:

er blood is settled, and her joints are stiff.

fe and these lips have long been separated:

ath lies on her like an untimely frost

on the sweetest flower of all the field.

FRSE O lamentable day!

DY CAPULET O woeful time!

PULET Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,

es up my tongue, and will not let me speak.

Musicians may enter here

Enter Friar and the County

RIAR LAURENCE Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

PULET Ready to go, but never to return.—

To Paris

son, the night before thy wedding-day

ath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,

ower as she was, deflowered by him.

ath is my son-in-law, Death is my heir:

y daughter he hath wedded. I will die,

nd leave him all: life, *living*⁷⁴, all is Death's.

RIS Have I *thought long*⁷⁵ to see this morning's face,

nd doth it give me such a sight as this?

DY CAPULET Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!

ost miserable hour that e'er time saw

*lasting*⁷⁹ labour of his pilgrimage!

it one, poor one, one poor and loving child,

it one thing to rejoice and solace in,

nd cruel death hath *caught*⁸² it from my sight!

RSE O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!

ost lamentable day, most woeful day,

at ever, ever, I did yet behold!

day, O day, O day, O hateful day!

ever was seen so black a day as this:

woeful day, O woeful day!

RIS [Beguiled](#)⁸⁹, divorcèd, wrongèd, spited, slain!

ost detestable death, by thee beguiled,

r cruel cruel thee quite overthrown!

love, O life! Not life, but love in death!

PULET Despised, distressèd, hated, martyred, killed!

[Uncomfortable](#)⁹⁴ time, why cam'st thou now

o murder, murder our [solemnity](#)?⁹⁵

child, O child! My soul, and not my child!

ad art thou! Alack, my child is dead,

id with my child my joys are burièd.

IAR LAURENCE Peace, ho, for shame! [Confusion](#)'s [care](#)⁹⁹ lives not

these confusions. Heaven and yourself

id part in this fair maid, now heaven hath all,

id all the better is it for the maid:

our part in her you could not keep from death,

it heaven keeps his part in eternal life.

ie most you sought was her [promotion](#)¹⁰⁵,

r 'twas your [heaven](#)¹⁰⁶ she should be advanced:

id weep ye now, seeing she is advanced

bove the clouds, as high as heaven itself?

in this love, you love your child so ill

at you run mad, seeing that she is well.

e's not well married that lives married long,

it she's best married that dies married young.

y up your tears, and [stick](#) your [rosemary](#)¹¹³

1 this fair corpse, and as the custom is,
1d in her best array bear her to church:
r though some nature bids us all lament,
t nature's tears are [reason's merriment](#).¹¹⁷

PULET All things that we [ordained festival](#)¹¹⁸,
rn from their [office](#)¹¹⁹ to black funeral:
r instruments to melancholy bells,
r wedding [cheer](#)¹²¹ to a sad burial feast,
r [solemn](#) hymns to [sullen](#)¹²² dirges change,
r bridal flowers serve for a buried corpse,
1d all things change them to the contrary.

IAR LAURENCE Sir, go you in, and madam, go with him,
1d go, Sir Paris: everyone prepare
o follow this fair corpse unto her grave.
ie heavens do [lour](#) upon you for some [ill](#)¹²⁸,
[love](#)¹²⁹ them no more by crossing their high will.

Exeunt [all but Nurse]

Musicians may enter here

1ST MUSICIAN Faith, we may [put up](#)¹³⁰ our pipes, and be gone.

URSE Honest goodfellows, ah, put up, put up,
r well you know this is a pitiful [case](#).¹³²

[Exit]

1ST MUSICIAN Ay, by my troth, the case may be [amended](#).¹³³

Enter Peter

TER Musicians, O, musicians, '[Heart's ease](#)'¹³⁴, 'Heart's
se'. O, an you will have me live, play 'Heart's ease'.

1ST MUSICIAN Why 'Heart's ease'?

TER O, musicians, because my heart itself plays '[My heart](#)'¹³⁷
full of woe'. O, play me some merry [dump](#)¹³⁸ to comfort me.

1ST MUSICIAN Not a dump we, 'tis no time to play now.

TER You will not, then?

FIRST MUSICIAN No.

TER I will then give it you [soundly](#).¹⁴²

FIRST MUSICIAN What will you give us?

TER No money, on my faith, but the [gleek](#): I will [give you](#)¹⁴⁴
e minstrel.

FIRST MUSICIAN Then will I give you the [serving-creature](#).¹⁴⁶

TER Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on
ur [pate](#). I will [carry no crotchets](#): I'll [re you](#), I'll [fa you](#).¹⁴⁸ Do
u [note](#)¹⁴⁹ me?

FIRST MUSICIAN An you re us and fa us, you note us.

COND MUSICIAN Pray you put up your dagger, and [put out](#)¹⁵¹
ur wit. Then have at you with my wit!

TER I will [dry-beat](#)¹⁵³ you with an iron wit, and put up my iron
gger. Answer me like men:

[hen griping](#)¹⁵⁵ griefs the heart doth wound,
ien music with her silver sound—

hy 'silver sound'? Why 'music with her silver sound'?

hat say you, Simon [Catling](#)?¹⁵⁸

FIRST MUSICIAN Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

TER [Prates](#). What say you, Hugh [Rebeck](#)?¹⁶⁰

COND MUSICIAN I say 'silver sound', because musicians [sound](#)¹⁶¹
r silver.

TER Prates too. What say you, James [Soundpost](#)?¹⁶³

FIRST MUSICIAN Faith, I know not what to say.

TER O, I [cry you mercy](#)¹⁶⁵, you are the singer: I will say for
u. It is 'music with her silver sound' because musicians
ve no gold [for sounding](#)¹⁶⁷:

ien music with her silver sound
ith speedy help doth lend redress.

Exit

1ST MUSICIAN What a pestilent knave is this same!

COND MUSICIAN Hang him, [Jack!](#)¹⁷¹ Come, we'll in here, tarry for
the mourners, and [stay](#)¹⁷² dinner.

Exeunt

[Act 5 Scene 1]

running scene 18

Enter Romeo

ROMEO If I may trust the [flattering](#)¹ truth of sleep,
my dreams [presage](#)² some joyful news at hand:
my [bosom's lord](#)³ sits lightly in his throne,
and all this day an unaccustomed spirit
lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead —
a strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to think! —
and breathed such life with kisses in my lips,
that I revived, and was an emperor.
O me, how sweet is love itself [possessed](#)¹⁰,
when but love's [shadows](#)¹¹ are so rich in joy!

Enter Romeo's Man

Wearing riding boots

NEWS from Verona!— How now, Balthasar!
Must thou not bring me letters from the friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How doth my lady Juliet? That I ask again,
For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

BALTHASAR Then she is well, and nothing can be ill:
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
and her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
and [presently took post](#)²¹ to tell it you.

pardon me for bringing these ill news,
since you did leave it [for my office](#)²³, sir.

MEO Is it even so? Then I [deny](#)²⁴ you, stars!—
you know'st my lodging, get me ink and paper,
and hire [post-horses](#)²⁶: I will hence tonight.

LTHASAR I do beseech you, sir, have patience:
your looks are pale and wild, and do [import](#)²⁸
me [misadventure](#).²⁹

MEO Tush, thou art deceived:
save me, and do the thing I bid thee do.
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

LTHASAR No, my good lord.

MEO No matter: get thee gone,
and hire those horses, I'll be with thee straight.—

Exit Man

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.
It's [see for](#) means. O [mischief](#)³⁷, thou art swift
to enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
I do remember an [apothecary](#)³⁹,
that hereabouts a dwells, [which](#)⁴⁰ late I noted
had tattered [weeds](#), with [overwhelming brows](#)⁴¹,
[filling of simples](#)⁴²: meagre were his looks,
sharp misery had worn him to the bones,
and in his [needy](#)⁴⁴ shop a tortoise hung,
an alligator stuffed, and other skins
of ill-shaped fishes, and about his shelves
a beggarly [account](#)⁴⁷ of empty boxes,
between [earthen](#) pots, [bladders](#)⁴⁸ and musty seeds,
remnants of [packthread](#) and old [cakes of roses](#)⁴⁹,
were thinly scattered, to make up a show.
Noting this penury, to myself I said

n if a man did need a poison now,
hose sale is present death⁵³ in Mantua,
ere lives a *caitiff*⁵⁴ wretch would sell it him.’
this same thought did but forerun my need,
nd this same needy man must sell it me.
I remember, this should be the house.
ing holy-day, the beggar’s shop is shut.
hat, ho, apothecary!

Enter Apothecary

OTHECARY Who calls so loud?

MEO Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.

Shows gold

old, there is forty *ducats*⁶²: let me have
dram of poison, such *soon-speeding gear*⁶³
will disperse itself through all the veins
*fat*⁶⁵ the life-weary taker may fall dead
nd that the *trunk*⁶⁶ may be discharged of breath
violently as hasty powder fired
th hurry from the fatal cannon’s womb.

OTHECARY Such *mortal*⁶⁹ drugs I have, but Mantua’s law
death to any *he* that *utters*⁷⁰ them.

MEO Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,
nd fear’st to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,
ed and oppression starveth in thy eyes,
ntempt and beggary hangs upon thy back:
ie world is not thy friend nor the world’s law:
ie world affords no law to make thee rich,
ien be not poor, but break *it*⁷⁷ and take this.

OTHECARY My poverty, but not my will, consents.

MEO I *pray*⁷⁹ thy poverty, and not thy will.

OTHECARY Put this in any liquid thing you will

and drink it off, and if you had the strength
of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

Gives gold

MEO There's thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,
bringing more murder in this loathsome world,
than these poor **compounds**⁸⁵ that thou mayst not sell.
Sell all thee poison, thou hast sold me none.
No newswell, buy food, and **get thyself in flesh**.⁸⁷—
Come, **cordial**⁸⁸ and not poison, go with me
To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

Exeunt [separately]

[Act 5 Scene 2]

running scene 19

Enter Friar John to Friar Laurence

FRIAR JOHN Holy Franciscan friar, brother, ho!

Enter Friar Laurence

FRIAR LAURENCE This same should be the voice of Friar John.—
Welcome from Mantua: what says Romeo?
If his mind be writ, give me his letter.

FRIAR JOHN Going to find a **barefoot brother**⁵ out,
one of our order, to **associate**⁶ me,
before in this city visiting the sick,
and finding him, the **searchers**⁸ of the town,
suspecting that we both were in a house
where the infectious **pestilence**¹⁰ did reign,
shut up the doors, and would not let us forth,
so that my **speed** to Mantua there was **stayed**.¹²

FRIAR LAURENCE Who bore my letter then to Romeo?

FRIAR JOHN I could not send it — here it is again —

Shows the letter

or get a messenger to bring it thee,
fearful were they of infection.

FRIAR LAURENCE Unhappy fortune! By my brotherhood,
the letter was not nice but full of charge¹⁸,
of dear import¹⁹, and the neglecting it
may do much danger.²⁰ Friar John, go hence,
get me an iron crow²¹, and bring it straight
unto my cell.

FRIAR JOHN Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

Exit

FRIAR LAURENCE Now must I to the monument alone,
within this three hours will fair Juliet wake:
she will beshrew me much that Romeo
with had no notice of these accidents²⁷,
that I will write again to Mantua,
and keep her at my cell till Romeo come.
For living corpse, closed in a dead man's tomb!

Exit

[Act 5 Scene 3]

running scene 20

Carrying flowers and a torch

Enter Paris and his Page

PARIS Give me thy torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof.¹
Do not put it out, for I would not be seen.
Consider yon yew trees lay thee all along³,
holding thy ear close to the hollow ground,
I shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,
nothing⁶ loose, unfirm with digging up of graves,
that thou shalt hear it: whistle then to me
as signal that thou hear'st something approach.

ve me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

Aside

GE I am almost afraid to [stand](#)¹⁰ alone

Stands back

ere in the churchyard, yet I will [adventure](#).¹¹

RIS Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew —

Strews flowers and sprinkles perfumed water

woe, thy [canopy](#)¹³ is dust and stones —
hich with sweet water nightly I will dew,
not wanting that, with tears distilled by moans;
the [obsequies](#)¹⁶ that I for thee will keep
rightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

Whistle Boy

the boy gives warning something doth approach.
That cursèd foot wanders this way tonight,
to [cross](#)²⁰ my obsequies and true love's rite?
That, with a torch? Muffle me, night, awhile.

Stands back

Enter Romeo and Balthasar

Carrying a mattock and wrenching iron

MEO Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.

ould, take this letter: early in the morning

Gives a letter

ere thou deliver it to my lord and father.
Give me the light. Upon thy life, I charge thee,

Takes a torch

Whatever thou hear'st or see'st, stand all aloof,
and do not interrupt me in my course.
Why I descend into this bed of death
partly to behold my lady's face,
and chiefly to take thence from her dead finger

precious ring, a ring that I must use
dear employment³²: therefore hence, begone.

it if thou, jealous³³, dost return to pry
what I further shall intend to do,
heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint
and strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs:
the time and my intents are savage-wild,
more fierce and more inexorable far
than empty tigers or the roaring sea.

LTHASAR I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

MEIO So shalt thou show me friendship. Take thou that.

Gives money

ve and be prosperous, and farewell, good fellow.

Aside

LTHASAR For all this same⁴³, I'll hide me hereabout:

Stands aside

as looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.⁴⁴

Romeo begins to open the tomb

MEIO Thou detestable maw, thou womb⁴⁵ of death,
orged with the dearest morsel of the earth:
thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
and in despite⁴⁸ I'll cram thee with more food.

Aside

RIS This is that banished haughty Montague,
that murdered my love's cousin, with which grief
is supposed the fair creature died,
and here is come to do some villainous shame
to the dead bodies. I will apprehend him.—

Comes forward

Open thy unhallowed⁵⁴ toil, vile Montague!
In vengeance be pursued further than death?

condemned villain, I do apprehend thee:

Go thy way and go with me, for thou must die.

MEO I must indeed, and therefore came I hither.

Good gentle youth, tempt not a desp'rate man,
Fly hence, and leave me: think upon these gone⁶⁰,

that they have affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,

Commit not another sin upon my head,

For urging me to fury: O, begone!

For heaven, I love thee better than myself,

For I come hither armed against myself.

Say not, begone, live, and hereafter say,

A madman's mercy bid thee run away.

RIS I do defy thy commiseration⁶⁸,

And will apprehend thee for a felon here.

MEO Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

They fight

GE O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.

[Exit]

RIS O, I am slain! If thou be merciful,

Dies

Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.

MEO In faith, I will. Let me peruse this face.

Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!

What said my man, when my betossed soul

Would not attend him as we rode? I think

He told me Paris *should have*⁷⁸ married Juliet:

Or did he not so? Or did I dream it so?

Or am I mad, hearing *him*⁸⁰ talk of Juliet,

Or think it was so? O, give me thy hand,

That I may writ with me in sour misfortune's book!

Opens the tomb, revealing Juliet

l bury thee in a [triumphant](#)⁸³ grave.
grave? O no, a [lantern](#)⁸⁴, slaughtered youth,
r here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
his vault a feasting [presence](#)⁸⁶ full of light.
ath, lie thou there, by a dead man interred.
ow oft when men are at the point of death
ave they been merry, which their [keepers](#)⁸⁹ call
light'ning before death. O, how may I
all this a light'ning? O my love, my wife!
ath that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
ath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
ou art not conquered, beauty's [ensign](#)⁹⁴ yet
crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
id death's pale flag is not [advanced](#)⁹⁶ there.—
balt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
what more favour can I do to thee
an with that hand that cut thy youth in twain
sunder [his that was thy enemy?](#)¹⁰⁰
rgive me, cousin.— Ah, dear Juliet,
hy art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
at [unsubstantial](#)¹⁰³ death is amorous,
id that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps
ee here in dark to be his paramour?
r fear of that, I [still](#)¹⁰⁶ will stay with thee,
id never from this palace of dim night
Depart again. Come lie thou in my arms.//
Here's to thy health, where'er thou tumblest in.//
O [true](#)¹¹⁰ apothecary,//
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.//
part again. Here, here will I remain
ith worms that are thy chambermaids: O, here

ill I set up my everlasting rest,
id shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
om this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!
ms, take your last embrace! And, lips, O you
ie doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss

Kisses Juliet

dateless bargain to engrossing¹¹⁹ death!
me, bitter conduct¹²⁰, come, unsavoury guide!
ou desperate pilot, now at once run on
ie dashing¹²² rocks thy seasick weary bark!
ere's to my love. O true apothecary,

Drinks

ly drugs are quick.¹²⁴ Thus with a kiss I die.

Dies

Enter Friar Laurence with lantern, crow and spade

FIAR LAURENCE Saint Francis be my speed!¹²⁵ How oft tonight
ave my old feet stumbled at graves! Who's there?

LTHASAR Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

FIAR LAURENCE Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,
hat torch is yon that vainly¹²⁹ lends his light
o grubs and eyeless skulls? As I discern,
burneth in the Capels' monument.

LTHASAR It doth so, holy sir, and there's my master,
ie that you love.

FIAR LAURENCE Who is it?

LTHASAR Romeo.

FIAR LAURENCE How long hath he been there?

LTHASAR Full half an hour.

FIAR LAURENCE Go with me to the vault.

LTHASAR I dare not, sir.

My master knows not but I am gone hence,
And fearfully did menace me with death
I did stay to look on his intents.

LIAR LAURENCE Stay then, I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me:
Much I fear some ill unlucky thing.

ALTHASAR As I did sleep under this yew tree here,
I dreamt my master and another fought,
And that my master slew him.

LIAR LAURENCE Romeo!
Alack, alack, what blood is this which stains
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?
What mean these masterless and gory swords
To lie discoloured by this place of peace?
Romeo! O, pale! Who else? What, Paris too?
And steeped in blood? Ah, what an unkind¹⁵⁴ hour
Guilty of this lamentable chance!
The lady stirs.

Waking

LIET O, comfortable¹⁵⁷ friar, where's my lord?
Do remember well where I should be,
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

LIAR LAURENCE I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest
Of death, contagion and unnatural sleep:
A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.
Your husband in thy bosom there lies dead,
And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming.
Come, go, good Juliet, I dare no longer stay.

Exit

LIET Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.
What's here? A cup closed in my true love's hand?
Whom I see hath been his [timeless](#)¹⁷¹ end.
[Churl](#)¹⁷², drink all and left no friendly drop
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips,
[Apply](#)¹⁷⁴ some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative.

Kisses him

My lips are warm.

Enter Boy and Watch [Constable and other Watchmen]

At a distance

CONSTABLE Lead, boy, which way?

LIET Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O [happy](#)¹⁷⁸ dagger,
This is thy sheath: there rust, and let me die.

Kills herself

BOY This is the place, there where the torch doth burn.

CONSTABLE The ground is bloody, search about the churchyard:
Some of you, whoe'er you find [attach](#).¹⁸²

[Exeunt some Watchmen]

Piteous sight! Here lies the county slain,
And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,
Whom here hath lain these two days buried.
Go, tell the prince, run to the Capulets,
And rise up the Montagues, some others search.

[Exeunt other Watchmen]

How shall we see the ground whereon these woes do lie,
That the true [ground](#)¹⁸⁹ of all these piteous woes
We cannot without [circumstance](#)¹⁹⁰ descry.

Enter Romeo's man [Balthasar with Watchman]

COND WATCHMAN Here's Romeo's man: we found him in the churchyard.

CONSTABLE Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

Enter Friar and another Watchman

FRID WATCHMAN Here is a friar that trembles, sighs and weeps:
He took this mattock and this spade from him,
As he was coming from this churchyard side.

FRANZ STABLE A great suspicion: [stay](#)¹⁹⁶ the friar too.

Enter the Prince [and Attendants]

PRINCE What misadventure is so early up,
That calls our person from our morning rest?

Enter Capulet and his Wife [and others]

CAPULET What should it be that they so shriek abroad?

FRIDY CAPULET O, the people in the street cry 'Romeo',
Some 'Juliet', and some 'Paris', and all run
With open outcry toward our monument.

PRINCE What fear is this which startles in your ears?

FRANZ STABLE Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain,
And Romeo dead, and Juliet, dead before,
Half-smother'd in her womb and new killed.

PRINCE Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.

FRANZ STABLE Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man,
With instruments upon them, fit to open
These dead men's tombs.

CAPULET O heaven! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!
This dagger hath [mista'en](#)²¹² — for lo his house
Is empty on the back of Montague —
And is mis-sheathèd in my daughter's bosom!

FRIDY CAPULET O me, this sight of death is as a bell
That [warns](#) my old age to a [sepulchre](#).²¹⁶

Enter Montague

PRINCE Come, Montague, for thou art early up
To see thy son and heir now early down.

›NTAGUE Alas, my liege, my wife **is dead tonight**²¹⁹:

rief of my son's exile hath stopped her breath.

hat further woe conspires against my age?

INCE Look and thou shalt see.

›NTAGUE O, thou **untaught**²²³, what manners is in this?

› press before thy father to a grave?

INCE Seal up the **mouth of outrage**²²⁵ for awhile,

↓The tomb may be closed↓

ll we can clear these ambiguities,

nd know their **spring, their head**²²⁷, their true descent,

nd then will I be **general**²²⁸ of your woes,

nd lead you even **to death**.²²⁹ Meantime forbear,

nd let mischance be **slave to**²³⁰ patience.—

ing forth the parties of suspicion.

›AR LAURENCE I am the greatest, able to do least,

›t most suspected, as the time and place

›th **make against**²³⁴ me of this direful murder:

›d here I stand both to **impeach and purge**²³⁵

›yself condemnèd and myself excused.

INCE Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

›AR LAURENCE I will be brief, for my short **date of breath**²³⁸

›not so long as is a tedious tale.

›meo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet,

›d she, there dead, that's Romeo's faithful wife:

›narried them and their stol'n marriage day

›as Tybalt's doomsday, whose untimely death

›nished the new-made bridegroom from this city,

›r whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.

›u, to remove that siege of grief from her,

›strothed and would have married her **perforce**²⁴⁷

› County Paris. Then comes she to me,

and with wild looks bid me devise some means
to rid her from this second marriage,
lest in my cell there would she kill herself.
When gave I her — so tutored by my art²⁵²—
a sleeping potion, which so took effect
as I intended, for it wrought²⁵⁴ on her
the form of death. Meantime I writ to Romeo
that he should hither come as²⁵⁶ this dire night
to help to take her from her borrowed grave,
during the time the potion's force should cease.
The friar which bore my letter, Friar John,
as stayed²⁶⁰ by accident, and yesternight
returned my letter back. Then all alone,
at the prefixèd hour of her waking,
came I to take her from her kindred's vault,
meaning to keep her closely²⁶⁴ at my cell,
whenever I conveniently could send to Romeo.
But when I came — some minute ere the time
of her awaking — here untimely lay
the noble Paris and true²⁶⁸ Romeo dead.
When she wakes, and I entreated her come forth,
and bear this work of heaven with patience:
but then a noise did scare me from the tomb,
and she, too desperate, would not go with me,
but, as it seems, did violence on herself.
Of this I know, and to the marriage
my nurse is privy: and if aught²⁷⁵ in this
miscarried by my fault, let my old life
be sacrificed, some hour before the time²⁷⁷,
unto the rigour of severest law.

SINCE We still²⁷⁹ have known thee for a holy man.—

here's Romeo's man? What can he say to this?

LTHASAR I brought my master news of Juliet's death,
and then in [post](#)²⁸² he came from Mantua
to this same place, to this same monument.

Shows letter

In his letter he early bid me give his father,
and threatened me with death, going in the vault,
I departed not and left him there.

PRINCE Give me the letter, I will look on it.
Where is the county's page, that raised the watch?—
Nay, what [made](#)²⁸⁹ your master in this place?
PRINCE He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave,
and bid me stand aloof, and so I did:
When comes one with light to ope the tomb,
and [by and by](#)²⁹³ my master drew on him,
and then I ran away to call the watch.

PRINCE This letter doth [make good](#)²⁹⁵ the friar's words,
of their course of love, the tidings of her death:
and here he writes that he did buy a poison
of a poor 'pothecary, and [therewithal](#)²⁹⁸
to come to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.
Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague?
Nay, what a [scourge](#)³⁰¹ is laid upon your hate,
that heaven finds means to kill your [joys](#)³⁰² with love.
and I for [winking at](#)³⁰³ your discords too
have lost a [brace](#)³⁰⁴ of kinsmen: all are punished.
CAPULET O brother Montague, give me thy hand:
this is my daughter's [jointure](#)³⁰⁶, for no more
can I demand.

MONTAGUE But I can give thee more,
for I will [raise](#) her [statue](#)³⁰⁹ in pure gold,

at whiles Verona by that name is known,
ere shall no **figure** at such **rate be set**³¹¹
that of true and faithful Juliet.

PULET As rich shall **Romeo**³¹³ by his lady lie,
for sacrifices of³¹⁴ our enmity!

INCE A **glooming**³¹⁵ peace this morning with it brings,
e sun, for sorrow, will not show his head.

hence to have more talk of these sad things:
me shall be pardoned, and some punishèd,
r never was a story of more woe
an this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Exeunt

TEXTUAL NOTES

Q1 = First Quarto text of 1597 (of uncertain authority)

Q2 = Second Quarto text of 1599

Q1/Q2 = a reading in which the First Quarto and Second Quarto agree

Q3 = Third Quarto text of 1609

Q4 = Fourth Quarto text of 1622

F = First Folio text of 1623

F2 = a correction introduced in the Second Folio text of 1632

Ed = a correction introduced by a later editor

SD = stage direction

SH = speech heading (i.e. speaker's name)

List of parts = Ed Prologue ... mend = Q2. *Not in F*

1.25 in = Q1. *Not in F* **59 swashing** = Q4. F = washing **73 SH LADY CAPULET** = Ed. F = *Wife (or Mo. or Old La. throughout)* **76 SH LADY MONTAGUE** = Ed. F = *2. Wife* **97 further** = Q1/Q2. F = Fathers **125 humour** = Q2. F = Honour **142 other** = Q2. F = others **175 create** = Q1. F = created **178 well-seeming** = Q4. F = welseeing **214 bide** = Q2. F = bid **215 ope** = Q2. F = open

2.42 are here = Q2. F = are **48 thy** = Q2. F = the **58 God ... e'en spelled** *Godgigoden in F* **65 daughters** = Q2. F = *daughter* **99 she ... show** = Q1/Q2. F (*uncorrected*) = she shew scant shell. F (*corrected*) = she shall scant shell **99 seems** = Q2. F = shewes

3.32 eleven = Q2. F = a eleuen **40 should** = Q1/Q2. F = shall **41 Jule** = Q2. F = *Iulet*. Q1 = Juliet **43 SH LADY CAPULET** = Ed. F = *Old La.* **58, 59 honour** = Q1. F = *houre* **91 it** = Q1. *Not in F* **96 SH LADY CAPULET** = Ed. F = *Mo.*

4.18 so = Q2. F = to **43 in** = Q2. F = I **44 light lights** = Ed. F = lights lights **46 five** = Ed. F = fine **55 O ... bodes** = *prose in Q2/F, verse in Q* **57 an** = Q1/Q2. *Not in F* **65 film** = F2. F = Philome **68 maid** = Q1. F = man **74 curtsies spelled** *Cursies in F* **75 dream** = Q2. F = dreamt **81 a** = Q1/Q2. *Not in F* **88 ear** = Q2. F = eares **92 elflocks** = Q1. F = Elk-locks **119 SH CHIEF SERVINGMAN** = Ed. F = *Ser.* **132 SH CAPULET** = Ed. F = *1. Capu.* **137 a bout** = Ed. F = about **142 SD they** = Q2. F = *the* **157 SH CAPULET** = Q2 (*1. Capu.*). F = *3. Cap.* **188 this** = Q2. F = the **200 my** = Q2. F = the **216 ready** = Q1. F = did ready **259 wedding** = Q1/Q2. F = wedded **267 learned** =

Q1/Q2. F = learne

0.1 SH CHORUS = Ed. *Not in F*

1.8 SH MERCUTIO *Nay ... too* = Q1. *Line assigned to Benvolio in F* **11 but** = Q2. F = me but **12 pronounce** = Q1. F = Prouant **12 dove** = Q1. F = day **14 heir** = Q1. F = her **18 and I** = Q2. F = I **27 it there** = Q2. F = it **40 open arse and** = Ed. F = open, or. Q1 = open *Et caetera* **65 eye** = F. Q1 = eyes **88 nor any other part** = Q1. *Not in F* **89 Belonging ... name** = Ed. F = O be some other name / Belonging to a man **90 What's ... name?** = Q1. F = What? in a names **139 love me** = Q2. F = Loue **142 laughs** = Q2. F = laught **150 more** = Q1. *Not in F* **156 blessed moon** = Q2. F = Moone **209 toward** = Q2. F = towards **214 mine** = Q1. *Not in F* **220 nyas** = Ed. F = Neece **239–240 Parting ... morrow assigned to Juliet as in Q1. F assigns to Romeo** **241 SH ROMEO Sleep ... breast!** = Q1. F assigns to Juliet

2.95 households' = Q2. F = houshould

3.20 minim rests = Q2. F = minum **26 phantasimes** = Ed. F = phantacies **41 the** = Q2. F = the the **45 good Mercutio** = Q2. F = *Mercutio* **49 curtsy spelled cursie in F** **61 Switch spelled Swits in F** **73 then well** = Q2. F = well **94 for** = Q1/Q2. F = or **98 good e'en spelled gooden in F** **104 well said** = Q2. F = said **107 SH ROMEO** = Q1/Q2. F = *Nur.* **169 stay** = Q2. F = stay thou **180 man's** = Q2. F = man **184 see a toad** = Q2. F = a see Toade

4.11 Is = Q2. F = I **40 leg** = Q2. F = legs **43 gentle as** = Q2. F = gentle **45 this** = Q2. F = this this **52 that** = Q2. F = that that **52 not** = Q2. F = so

5.23 is his = Q2. F = in his **33 such** = Q2. F = such such **34 sum up sum spelled sum vp some in F**

1.27 ribbon spelled Riband in F **66 love** = Q2. F = lou'd **71 stoccado spelled stucatho in F** **114 Mercutio is** = Q1/Q2. F = *Mercutio's* is **117 more spelled mo in F** **141 prince's name** = Q2. F = Princes names **152 bloody fray** = Q2. F = Fray **159 Tybalt** = Q2. F = *Tybalts* **167 agile** = Q1. F = aged **185 SH MONTAGUE** = Q4. F = *Cap.* **195 out** = Q2. F = our **199 but** = Q1/Q2. F = not

2.9 By = Q4. F = And by **38 welladay spelled welady in F** **38 he's dead** = Q2. F omits third repetition **51 shut spelled shot in F** **56 corpse spelled Coarse in F throughout** **58 swoonèd spelled sounded in F** **62 one spelled on in F** **74 SH NURSE** = Q1. *Assigned to Juliet in F* **75 SH JULIET** = Q1. *Assigned to the Nurse in F* **78 Dove-feathered** = Ed. F = Rauenous Doue-feather'd **81 damnèd** = Q4. F = dimne **99 chide at** = Q2. F = chide **112 word** = Q2. F = words **125 with** = Q2. F = which

3.48 Howling = Q2. F = Howlings **52 a little speak** = Q2. F = speake **63 dispute** = Q1/Q2. F = dispaire **65 I, Juliet thy** = Q2. F = *Iuliet* my **78 will? F here prints a redundant entry direction for the Nurse** **99 cancelled** = Q1/Q2. F =

conceal'd **105 deadly** = Q2. F = dead **120 lives** = F2. F = lies **144 of** = Q1/Q2. F = or **144 blessings** = Q1/Q2. F = blessing **146 mishavèd** = Q2. F = mishaped **147 pouts upon** = Q4. F = puttest vp

4.35 very late = Q2. F = late

5.21 the = Q1. *Not in F* **35 light it** = Q1/Q2. F = itli ght **36 SD Enter Nurse** = Ed. F = *Enter Madam and Nurse* **66 It is** = Q2. F = Is it **86 him** = Q4. *Not in F* **115 that** = Q2. F = this **119 thee there** = Q2. F = thee **123 woo** = Q2. F = woe **139 thy** = Q2. F = the **151 hate** = Q1/Q2. F = haue **155 And ... you?** = Q2. *Line omitted in F, probably due to compositorial eyeskip* **177 gossips** = Q2. F = gossip **179 SH CAPULET** = Q1. F = Father (*printed as part of the dialogue*) **180 SH NURSE** = Q4. *Not in F* **182 bowl** = Q2. F = bowles **186 tide** = Q2. F = ride **219 Alack** = Q2. F = Hlacke **248 Is it** = Q1/Q2. F = It is

1.35 my face = Q2. F = thy face **41 we** = Q1/Q2. F = you **48 strains** = Q2. F = streames **55 with this** = Q2. F = with' his **76 from** = Q1/Q2. F = fro **79 off spelled of in F** **84 chapless** = Q1. F = chappels **86 tomb** = Ed (Q1 = Or lay me in tombe with one new dead). F = graue **101 wanny** = Ed. F = many **101 thy** = Q2. F = the **102 shuts** = Q2. F = shut **117-18 and ... waking** = Q3. *Not in F, due to compositorial eyeskip* **123 fear** = Q2. F = care

3.17 life = Q2. F = fire **50 wake** = Q4. F = walke **58 a** = Q2. F = my

4.15 what is = Q2. F = what **16 SH SERVINGMAN** = Q1. F = *Fel.* **20 SH ANOTHER SERVINGMAN** = Q1 (*Ser.*). F = *Fel.* **106 should** = Q2. F = shouldst **116 us all** = Q2. F = all us **130 SH FIRST MUSICIAN** = Ed. F = *Mu.* **138 of woe** = Q4. *Not in F* **138-139 O ... me** = Q2. *Not in F, probably due to compositorial eyeskip* **160, 163 Prates** = Q2. F = Pratest

1.3 lord abbreviated L. in F **4 this day** = Q2. F = thisan day **17 SH BALTHASAR** = Q1. F = *Man. (throughout scene)* **19 lives** = Q2. F = live **34 No** = Q2. F = Mo **35 SD Exit Man** = *positioned here in Q1, two lines earlier in F* **40 a dwells** = Q2. F = dwells

3.1 aloof = Q2. F = aloft **3 yew** = Q1. F = young **19 way** = Q2. F = wayes **20 rite spelled right in F** **22 SD Balthasar** = Q1. F = *Peter* **40 SH BALTHASAR** = Q1. F = *Pet. (throughout scene)* **60 these** = Q2. F = those **71 SH PAGE** = Q4. F = *Pet.* **94 art** = Q2. F = are **102-103 Shall ... That** = Ed. F = I will beleeeue, / Shall I beleeeue, that **143 Fear** = Q2. F = feares **145 yew** = Ed. F = young **169 not away** = Q2. F = notuaway **172 left** = Q2. F = lest **177 SH CONSTABLE** = Ed. F = *Match. (for Watch., but has Con. at 192 and 196)* **179 This is** = Q2. F = 'Tis in **180 SH PAGE** = Ed. F = *Boy.* **191 SH SECOND WATCHMAN** = Ed. F = *Watch* **198 morning** = Q2. F = mornings **202 our** = Q2. F = out **223 is in** = Q1/Q2. F = in is **281 SH BALTHASAR** = Q2. F = *Boy.* **311 such** = Q2. F = that

SCENE-BY-SCENE ANALYSIS

PROLOGUE

The sonnet structure emphasizes the poetic nature of the play, a high proportion of which is in verse. The themes of love, conflict, and fate are introduced and, in revealing the outcome of the story, the deaths of the “star-crossed lovers’ Romeo and Juliet are established as predestined. The meta-theatrical reference to the “two hours’ traffic of our stage” establishes the repeated motif of time which gives intensity and pace to events and emphasizes the brevity of the lives and marriage of Romeo and Juliet.

ACT 1 SCENE 1

Lines 1–155: Sampson and Gregory discuss their hatred of the Montagues in a witty, bawdy exchange. They encounter two Montague Servingmen and provoke them to a fight. Benvolio tries to intervene, but Tybalt appears and, declaring that he hates “all Montagues,” fights him. Lord and Lady Capulet arrive, followed by Lord and Lady Montague. The heads of the two houses threaten each other while being restrained by their wives, emphasizing the links and tensions between private and public that run throughout the play as the quarrel between the two families spills onto the streets of Verona. Prince Escalus announces that the next person to disturb the peace by fighting will be executed. The Montagues remain, questioning Benvolio about the quarrel, glad that Romeo does not seem to have been involved. Benvolio reveals that Romeo was out “early walking,” “an hour before the worshipped sun.” The sun is a key image in the play, used to create binary images of light and dark and life and death, as well as helping to evoke the progress of time. Montague describes his concern over his son’s recent moods: his “tears” and “deep sighs” and how he “locks fair daylight out” of his chamber, creating “artificial night.” Romeo himself approaches and the Montagues leave Benvolio to speak to him.

Lines 156–243: Benvolio learns that Romeo is in love, but that his love is unrequited. With the exaggerated poeticism of a young lover, Romeo offers to “groan and tell” who it is he loves, but is countered by Benvolio’s prosaic responses. Romeo explains that the girl he loves has sworn herself to chastity, emphasizing the sexual side of love that presents a counterpart to the more spiritual, poetic notions of “romance” throughout the play. In an exchange that raises the theme of sight and perception, Benvolio argues that Romeo should “forget to think of her” and “Examine other beauties” instead, but Romeo claims that “He that is stricken blind cannot forget / The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.”

ACT 1 SCENE 2

Lines 1–37: Paris asks for Juliet’s hand in marriage, but Montague argues that she is too young: “She hath not seen the change of fourteen years.” Despite Paris’ argument that “Younger than she are happy mothers made,” Montague says that

he must wait, but gives him permission to “woo” Juliet and “get her heart,” showing that he favors the suit and that Juliet’s husband will be subject to his choice and approval rather than her own. He invites Paris to a “feast” that night and sends his Servingman out with a list of invitations.

Lines 38–101: The Servingman cannot read, so appeals to Benvolio and Romeo to help. He thanks them by inviting them to the feast, as long as they are “not of the house of Montagues.” On the list is Capulet’s niece, Rosaline, the object of Romeo’s unrequited love, and Benvolio suggests that they go so that Romeo can compare Rosaline with other women and see that his “swan” is a “crow.” His reference to the “crystal scales” of Romeo’s eyes in which he can weigh Rosaline “against some other maid” reinforces the motif of sight and also raises the concept of opposition and balance which is sustained throughout the play, as characters, themes, and concepts of light/dark, life/death, male/female, and actions/words are “weighed” against each other.

ACT 1 SCENE 3

In addition to her own deliberate bawdy humor, the Nurse becomes an unwitting figure of fun through her unconsciously long-winded and vulgar speeches. Lady Capulet tells her to call Juliet and then leave them to speak privately, but changes her mind and asks her to stay, perhaps emphasizing a closeness between the Nurse and Juliet that is lacking in the mother-daughter relationship. Juliet’s youth is focused on again as Lady Capulet comments that she is of “a pretty age.” The Nurse agrees, relating a lengthy, repetitious anecdote concerning an unwitting sexual innuendo made by the infant Juliet. She is finally silenced by Juliet, and Lady Capulet introduces the idea of marriage. Juliet says that this is “an honour” that she “dream[s] not of.” With interruptions from the Nurse, Lady Capulet reveals that “The valiant Paris” seeks Juliet “for his love.” Juliet promises that she will “look to like” Paris but, while her words are obedient, they are noncommittal.

ACT 1 SCENE 4

Lines 1–118: Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio are dressed as Masquers, a visual representation of the secrecy in the play. Romeo wishes to carry a torch rather than dance, but Mercutio insists that he join in. Their exchange reveals Mercutio’s verbal dexterity and, once again, the tensions between “romance” and sex are emphasized as Romeo’s declarations of love are given a bawdy twist by Mercutio. Romeo worries that they should not go because of a dream he has had, but Mercutio mocks him, claiming that Romeo has been with “Queen Mab.” Mercutio is temporarily consumed by his own imagination and words in a fervent, fantastical description of Mab, which becomes more disturbing in its imagery until Romeo interrupts. Despite Benvolio’s practical comments, Romeo insists that there is “Some consequence yet hanging in the stars,” an “untimely death,” emphasizing the presence of fortune/fate in the events of the play, and

creating dramatic irony.

Lines 132–213: Capulet encourages everyone to dance. As he watches the dancers he reminisces about how long it is since he was “in a mask”—“thirty years” ago, establishing another contrast in the play: age and youth. Romeo sees Juliet and, struck by her beauty, declares that he did not “love till now.” His description of Juliet reinforces the imagery of light and dark: she is “a snowy dove trooping with crows,” but the references to a jewel and his claim that her beauty is “too rich for use,” “too dear,” also reinforce Juliet’s potential status as a commodity within a patriarchal world. Tybalt recognizes Romeo’s voice and, outraged at the intrusion, sends a servant for his rapier. Capulet tells him to be “content” and “take no note,” as he does not want “a mutiny among [his] guests.” The movement in Capulet’s speech between reproving Tybalt and talking to his guests emphasizes the tension between public and private in this scene.

Lines 214–232: This tension is heightened as Romeo and Juliet speak, touch, and kiss for the first time: a poignantly intimate moment that takes place within a public space. Their initial exchange is in the form of a sonnet, each contributing a quatrain and then uniting in alternate lines. This echoes traditional expressions of romantic love, but perhaps also serves to remind us of the sonnet prologue and the destiny of the lovers. The pair use religious imagery throughout the exchange and, despite a loverlike wrangling, there is a unity in language, both of structure and imagery, that is in contrast with much of the verbal sparring—comic or aggressive—that has taken place so far in the play. Romeo is initially more forward, being more practiced at flirtation than youthful Juliet, but soon she is urging him to “Give me my sin again.”

Lines 233–270: Juliet’s Nurse interrupts, sending her to speak with her mother. Romeo takes the opportunity to ask who she is. Learning that she is a Capulet, he laments: “My life is my foe’s debt.” Juliet calls her Nurse and, seeming to inquire after a number of guests, contrives to find out Romeo’s identity. She privately asserts that, if he is married, her “grave is like to be [her] wedding bed,” echoing Romeo’s earlier speeches that foreshadow their fate. The Nurse reveals that he is “Romeo, and a Montague” and, again echoing Romeo’s words, Juliet declares: “My only love sprung from my only hate!”

ACT 2, CHORUS

A sonnet details Romeo’s switch in allegiance from Rosaline to Juliet and the difficulties besetting the new lovers.

ACT 2 SCENE 1

Lines 1–45: Romeo hides as Mercutio and Benvolio look for him. When he does not respond, Mercutio (unaware that Romeo is now in love with Juliet) begins to mock him, first as a conventional lover who sighs and speaks in rhyme, and then becoming increasingly more bawdy, saying that Romeo wishes Rosaline “were /

An open arse [slang name for the medlar fruit] and [he] a pop'rin pear." Benvolio decides that Romeo "means not to be found," and he and Mercutio leave.

Lines 46–248: Romeo begins to comment, but stops as he sees Juliet above. Using images of light to describe her once more, he claims that "Juliet is the sun," sustaining this celestial imagery (reinforced by their relative positions on the stage). Romeo's tone shifts toward physical desire as he wishes not just to watch but to touch: "O, that I were a glove upon that hand, / That I might touch that cheek." Juliet, believing herself alone, speaks and Romeo forms a dual audience with the one in theater. She declares her love and wishes that Romeo was not a Montague, saying that if he would be "but sworn" her love, she would "no longer be a Capulet." Romeo reveals his presence and declares that he will "be new baptized," reinforcing the religious imagery that runs throughout their exchanges. Shocked, Juliet demands to know who has intruded upon her "counsel" and, when Romeo identifies himself, fears that if her kinsmen find him there, they will kill him. Romeo claims that love helped him to "o'er-perch these walls" and that it will protect him. Juliet worries that Romeo will think her too forward and that their mutual declarations of love are "too rash, too unadvised, too sudden," but she acknowledges her love for him. During a series of "partings," as Juliet responds to calls from her Nurse and then returns to Romeo, Juliet declares that if Romeo's purpose is marriage, he must send word to her the next day "by the hour of nine."

ACT 1 SCENE 2

Friar Laurence is gathering herbs, showing his knowledge of their various properties. Romeo interrupts and the Friar is surprised to see him so early, guessing that "Romeo hath not been in bed tonight." When Romeo confirms this, Friar Laurence assumes that he has been with Rosaline, and is relieved when Romeo claims that he has "forgot that name." However, when Romeo confesses his love for Juliet and asks the Friar to marry them, Friar Laurence is skeptical, reminding Romeo of his all-consuming love for Rosaline and suggesting that "Young men's love then lies / Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes." Romeo insists that he loves Juliet and, more important, she loves him, which Rosaline did not. Friar Laurence relents, deciding that marriage between Romeo and Juliet may turn their "households' rancor to pure love."

ACT 2 SCENE 3

Mercutio and Benvolio believe Romeo is still pining for "hard-hearted" Rosaline. Benvolio reports that a challenge to Romeo from Tybalt has been delivered at the Montague house. When Romeo arrives, Mercutio continues his usual mockery. Romeo responds and there is a fast-paced, witty exchange that contrasts with the lower comedy that is generated after the arrival of the Nurse. She is looking for "the young Romeo" and, after Mercutio has poked fun at her, he and Benvolio leave. More humor is created by the Nurse's verbosity and Romeo's attempts to

get her to listen, but eventually he arranges that she will tell Juliet to go to Friar Laurence's cell that afternoon to be "shrived and married." He also tells her to wait for his man, who will bring a rope ladder for her to let down to him that night.

ACT 2 SCENE 4

Juliet anxiously waits for the Nurse who "promised to return" in "half an hour," but has been gone for three, another of the increasing references to time, creating a growing sense of urgency and transience. The Nurse arrives and teases Juliet with her procrastinating, but eventually tells her to go to Friar Laurence's cell, as "There stays a husband to make you a wife."

ACT 2 SCENE 5

The Friar and Romeo wait for Juliet and, again foreshadowing the tragic conclusion of the play, the Friar cautions against impetuous love, as "These violent delights have violent ends." Juliet arrives and the Friar leads them away to be married.

ACT 3 SCENE 1

In contrast to the privacy of the Friar's cell, and the romantic nature of the last few scenes, the action moves to the public arena of Verona's streets and focuses on violence and issues of male honor. It is hot, and Benvolio tries to persuade Mercutio to "retire," as such heat makes "mad blood" stir and that they "shall not scape a brawl" with the Capulets. Mercutio, somewhat unjustly, retorts that Benvolio is as capable of a quarrel as "any in Italy," and they are interrupted by Tybalt, looking for Romeo. As Mercutio and Tybalt's exchange becomes more heated, Benvolio again urges reason: they are in a "public haunt" and should withdraw to "some private place." Romeo arrives and Tybalt commands him to "turn and draw." Romeo refuses, caught between loyalty to his own household and that of his new wife. Although he cannot explain, he refuses to fight, assuring Tybalt that he has a reason to love him.

Frustrated by what he sees as "dishonourable, vile submission," Mercutio draws his sword on Tybalt. As Romeo and Benvolio try to part them, Tybalt stabs Mercutio and flees. Repeatedly calling down "A plague o'both the houses," Mercutio is led away to his death. Tybalt reappears and Romeo's anger is roused by his "triumph" in Mercutio's death, and they fight until Romeo kills Tybalt. Benvolio urges him to "begone" as he will be executed, and Romeo cries that he is "fortune's fool!" before escaping. Prince Escalus arrives with Montague and Capulet and their wives. Benvolio describes what has happened, emphasizing Romeo's initial refusal to fight. Each family blames the other and demands justice for their dead. Escalus decides to banish Romeo.

ACT 3 SCENE 2

Juliet's language shows an awakened sexual awareness as she impatiently invokes the night, claiming that she has "bought the mansion of a love / But not possessed it." Her Nurse arrives and Juliet demands news of Romeo, but all that the Nurse can repeat is "he's dead." Juliet understands this to mean Romeo and is overcome with grief until the Nurse mentions Tybalt, upon which Juliet believes them both to be dead. When the Nurse finally explains, Juliet finds herself in a position similar to that of Romeo in the previous scene as her loyalties are torn between her family and her husband, but she immediately defends Romeo when the Nurse curses him. Juliet laments Romeo's banishment, fearing that she will "die maiden-widowèd" and declares her intention to kill herself. The Nurse promises to find Romeo and bring him to Juliet, taking a ring to give to him.

ACT 3 SCENE 3

Romeo is hiding in Friar Laurence's cell when the Friar brings him news of his banishment, describing it as a "gentler judgement" than death. Romeo disagrees, arguing that "Heaven is here, / Where Juliet lives." He refuses the Friar's attempts to console him and throws himself to the ground. The Nurse arrives and urges him to "stand up" and "be a man: / For Juliet's sake." This appeal to his masculinity is echoed by the Friar; when Romeo threatens to stab himself he asks "Art thou a man?" and suggests that Romeo's tears are "womanish." He outlines a plan: Romeo will go to Juliet until he must leave for Mantua. Once he is in exile, they will find a way to put things right. The Nurse gives Romeo Juliet's ring, and the Friar promises to send news to Romeo in exile.

ACT 3 SCENE 4

Capulet tells his wife and Paris that Juliet will be "ruled" by him, and that Lady Capulet is to tell her she will be married to Paris on Thursday. The pace of events is emphasized, particularly by Capulet's observation that "It is so very late, / That we may call it early."

ACT 3 SCENE 5

Lines 1–64: Juliet tries to persuade Romeo that it is not yet morning: "It was the nightingale, and not the lark" that he heard. He explains that he must either leave or die, but at her refusal to acknowledge the dawn and their consequent separation, Romeo submits and says that he will face death. Juliet then insists that he leave and the Nurse interrupts to warn them of Lady Capulet's imminent arrival. The lovers say farewell and, in another ironic foreshadowing of their destinies, Juliet observes that Romeo is as pale "As one dead in the bottom of a tomb."

Lines 65–129: Lady Capulet misunderstands Juliet's tears as continued grief for Tybalt, and their subsequent conversation is filled with irony as Lady Capulet assumes that Juliet hates Romeo and Juliet manages to sustain dual meanings in everything that she says, reflecting the theme of concealment and Juliet's

separation from her family. Lady Capulet breaks the news that Juliet is to be married to Paris “early next Thursday morn,” but Juliet refuses. She is in an impossible situation: she cannot marry Paris but she cannot reveal her reasons to her family.

Lines 130–213: Juliet repeats her refusal to her father, who is furious. His violent rage contrasts with the tenderness of the lovers at the beginning of the scene, and these extremities of mood perhaps reflect Juliet’s turmoil at this point. Capulet reiterates his patriarchal authority and his “right” to dispose of her in marriage, threatening to disown her if she refuses: “An you be mine, I’ll give you to my friend, / An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets.” Juliet appeals to her mother, but Lady Capulet declares that she has “done” with her daughter.

Lines 214–254: Juliet’s final appeal is to her Nurse, but she also urges her to marry Paris, a “betrayal” that breaks the bond that has existed between them until now. After sending the Nurse to tell her mother that she has gone to Friar Laurence, Juliet acknowledges this break with her “counsellor” Nurse, declaring: “Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.” She decides that if the Friar cannot help her, she will kill herself.

ACT 4 SCENE 1

The relatively short scenes that make up this act increase the pace of the action and reinforce a sense of the unalterable direction of events.

Lines 1–44: Paris is at Friar Laurence’s cell, arranging his marriage to Juliet. The Friar is concerned by how soon the wedding is to be, but Paris explains that he has Capulet’s blessing, as they believe that Juliet is grieving “immoderately” for Tybalt and that marriage will “stop the inundation of her tears.” Juliet arrives and Paris greets her as “my lady and my wife,” but Juliet’s responses are reserved. She asks the Friar if he can hear her confession and Paris leaves, giving Juliet a “holy kiss”—an ironic reminder of her first meeting with Romeo.

Lines 45–128: Juliet tells the Friar that unless his wisdom can prevent her marriage, she will kill herself, showing him a knife. He replies that his solution is as “desperate” as the event they are trying to prevent: Juliet is to “consent / To marry Paris,” but on the night before her wedding she must drink the “distilling liquor” that he will give her. This will make her appear to be dead for “two-and-forty hours.” Friar Laurence will get word to Romeo and, once Juliet has been placed in the Capulet vault, Romeo will come and take her away to Mantua. Juliet agrees.

ACT 4 SCENE 2

Juliet tells her father that she has repented. Capulet declares that the marriage will take place the next day.

ACT 4 SCENE 3

Having selected her wedding clothes, Juliet says good night to her Nurse and her mother. Her soliloquy begins with a series of questions, revealing her uncertainty and concerns that the potion will not work, or that it will kill her in a “subtle” plan by Friar Laurence to prevent her telling of his role in the secret marriage. Her imagination conjures up the horrors of the tomb, including the body of Tybalt “fest’ring in his shroud,” but she resolves to take the potion, drinking to Romeo as she does so.

ACT 4 SCENE 4

Lines 1–129: Preparations are under way for the wedding and Capulet sends the Nurse to wake Juliet. The Nurse duly finds her “dead” and calls for her parents. The Friar and Paris arrive to take Juliet to church and are told the news. The Capulets, Paris, and the Nurse indulge in violent grief until the Friar offers reasoned, spiritual advice, arguing that Juliet “is advanced / Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself.” Capulet orders that the wedding preparations become those for a funeral.

Lines 130–172: In contrast with the rest of the scene, there is a comic exchange between the Servingman, Peter, and the Musicians.

ACT 5 SCENE 1

Romeo is in Mantua, recounting a dream in which Juliet found him dead but revived him with kisses. Balthasar interrupts and gives him the news of Juliet’s death. Romeo declares: “I deny you stars,” and announces his intention to return to Verona. After Balthasar leaves, Romeo calls on an Apothecary, knowing that the man is so poor that he will willingly sell him poison. Romeo leaves with a poison so strong that, if he “had the strength / Of twenty men,” it would kill him “straight.”

ACT 5 SCENE 2

Friar Laurence learns from Friar John that his message never reached Romeo, and he hurries to the Capulet tomb for Juliet’s waking.

ACT 5 SCENE 3

Lines 1–124: Paris lays flowers at the tomb. His Page signals that someone is approaching and Paris withdraws to watch, again creating a dual audience to the action and establishing a series of observers and intruders on Romeo and Juliet’s final moments, so that their deaths, like their first meeting, become a public rather than a private event. Romeo takes a “mattock and wrenching iron” from Balthasar, gives him a letter to Lord Montague and tells him to leave. Balthasar, however, conceals himself nearby as he doubts Romeo’s “intents.” Paris recognizes Romeo and, believing that he intends “some villainous scheme / To the dead bodies,” challenges him. Romeo, not recognizing Paris, warns him to

“tempt not a desp’rate man.” They fight and Romeo kills Paris, whose last request is to be laid beside Juliet. Romeo recognizes the man he has killed and declares that he will bury him in a “triumphant grave,” opening the tomb. He marvels at the beauty of Juliet and comments ironically that she does not seem dead. He says farewell, takes the poison, and, “with a kiss,” he dies.

Lines 125–179: Friar Laurence hurries to the tomb and sees Balthasar. He learns that Romeo has already entered, and when he goes in, he finds the bodies of Romeo and Paris. As he does so, Juliet awakes and asks for Romeo. The Friar is forced to tell her that he is dead, and urges her to come “from that nest / Of death” quickly, as the Watch is coming. He leaves, and Juliet finds the empty poison bottle, observing that Romeo has “left no friendly drop” to help her die. She kisses Romeo, and, hearing the Watch, she stabs herself.

Lines 180–320: While some Watchmen discover the bodies and send for the Capulets and the Montagues, others enter holding Balthasar and then the Friar. Prince Escalus and the families arrive, although Montague is alone: his wife has died from grief at Romeo’s banishment. Friar Laurence reveals the events that have led to this point in a statement that will both “condemn” and “purge” him. Capulet and Montague make peace, but this resolution has come at a high price.

ROMEO AND JULIET IN PERFORMANCE: THE RSC AND BEYOND

The best way to understand a Shakespeare play is to see it or ideally to participate in it. By examining a range of productions, we may gain a sense of the extraordinary variety of approaches and interpretations that are possible—a variety that gives Shakespeare his unique capacity to be reinvented and made “our contemporary” four centuries after his death.

We begin with a brief overview of the play’s theatrical and cinematic life, offering historical perspectives on how it has been performed. We then analyze in more detail a series of productions staged over the last half century by the Royal Shakespeare Company. The sense of dialogue between productions that can only occur when a company is dedicated to the revival and investigation of the Shakespeare canon over a long period, together with the uniquely comprehensive archival resource of promptbooks, program notes, reviews, and interviews held on behalf of the RSC at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon, allows an “RSC stage history” to become a crucible in which the chemistry of the play can be explored.

We then go to the horse’s mouth. Modern theater is dominated by the figure of the director. He or she must hold together the whole play, whereas the actor must concentrate on his or her part. The director’s viewpoint is therefore especially valuable. And finally, we offer the actor’s perspective: a view of the play through the eyes of Romeo and Juliet.

FOUR CENTURIES OF *ROMEO AND JULIET*: AN OVERVIEW

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare’s most popular plays, written around 1595–96, although there is no direct evidence of specific performance dates before the Restoration. Nevertheless, the early printed texts suggest that it was popular from the start; the First Quarto of 1597 claims that “it hath been often (with great applause) played publicly, by the right Honorable the Lord of Hunsdon his Servants”; the Second Quarto, two years later, says it is “Newly corrected, augmented and amended as it hath been sundry times publicly acted by the right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain his servants,” while the Third Quarto, after the accession of James I, when the Lord Chamberlain’s Men became the King’s Men, repeats the claim that “it hath been sundry times publicly acted by the King’s Majesty’s Servants.” We know that the company comedian Will Kempe played Peter, since “Kemp” appears in places instead of the speech prefix. The stage directions also tell us something about how the play must have been

staged, requiring an upper staging, a bed and a discovery space, and the stage properties required. There is good evidence that the company's leading actor, Richard Burbage, played the part of Romeo.

The first recorded performance after the Restoration was by Sir William Davenant's Duke's Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1662. Samuel Pepys attended the opening on 1 March:

and thence to the Opera and there saw *Romeo and Juliett*, the first time it was acted. But it is the play of itself the worst that ever I heard in my life, and the worst acted that ever I saw these people do; and I am resolved to go no more to see the first time of acting, for they were all of them out more or less.¹

In his *Roscius Anglicanus*, the bookkeeper of Davenant's company, John Downes, mentions a tragicomic adaptation by James Howard in which the lovers survive, which may have been the play that Pepys saw. Downes' cast list names Henry Harris as Romeo, Mary Saunderson as Juliet (the first female to play the part), and Thomas Betterton as Mercutio. In a later revival, Shakespeare's and Howard's plays were alternated. Downes also mentions the occasion on which,

there being a fight and scuffle in this play, between the House of Capulet, and House of Paris; Mrs Holden acting his wife, entered in a hurry, crying 'O my dear Count!' She inadvertently left out 'O' in the pronunciation of the word 'Count!' giving it a vehement accent, put the house into such laughter, that London Bridge at low-water was silence to it.²

Howard's version set a precedent for cutting, adapting, and rewriting the play. Shakespeare's text, with its mix of comedy and tragedy and bawdy language, was out of tune with Restoration sensibility and was not performed again until Theophilus Cibber's 1744 production.

In 1677 Davenant's company staged Thomas Otway's adaptation *The History and Fall of Caius Marius*, in which the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* is transposed to ancient Rome and given a contemporary political slant, being set against the background of civil war. Otway introduced other changes, including a scene in Juliet's garden where the lovers, Marius and Lavinia, played by Thomas Betterton and Elizabeth Barry, say their farewells. In the final act, Lavinia wakes before Marius dies, a variation retained by Cibber and Garrick. The most popular performances, though, were Cave Underhill as Sulpitius (Mercutio) and James Nokes' comic turn as the Nurse.

Cibber's 1744 revival advertised itself as Shakespeare's play "not acted once these 100 years," but was in fact an amalgamation of *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, with elements from Otway's play plus his own additions. Cibber cast himself as Romeo and his fourteen-year-old daughter, Jennie, as Juliet. Two years later, Thomas Sheridan mounted a successful

production at Smock Alley in Dublin. In 1748 Garrick staged the play at Drury Lane with Spranger Barry and Susannah Cibber as the leads. When they left for Covent Garden, Garrick took over the part of Romeo himself, with George Anne Bellamy as Juliet. They were thus in direct competition and critics were undecided as to which they preferred. This was one anonymous female spectator's verdict:

Had I been Juliet to Garrick's Romeo,—so ardent and impassioned was he, I should have expected that he would *come up* to me in the balcony; but had I been Juliet to Barry's Romeo, so tender, so eloquent, and so seductive was he, I should certainly have *gone down* to him!³

The critic Arthur Murphy however, under his pseudonym "Theatricus," objected that all four leading actors "seem to want what no actor can truly feign, no spectator can thoroughly be deceived in; I mean that degree of puberty, which is but just distinguished from childhood."⁴ Moreover, playgoers objected to the limited choice which the same play in both licensed theaters offered, and an anonymous contributor to the *London Magazine* complained:

Well—what to night? Says angry Ned,

As up from bed he rouses:

Romeo again!—and shakes his head,

Ah! Pox on both your houses.⁵

Garrick's adaptation, used in both productions and designed to clarify plot, focused on the lovers, eliminated Rosaline and all other extraneous elements including, according to Garrick's advertisement, its "jingle and quibble" (rhyming and punning), and included a "new duologue for the lovers in which they go successively mad";⁶ it was phenomenally successful, holding the stage for almost a century.

John Philip Kemble, using Garrick's text practically unaltered, played Romeo in a handful of performances, and Sarah Siddons played Juliet only once. Edmund Kean's Romeo was equally uninspired; according to the normally enthusiastic William Hazlitt, "Mr Kean ... stood like a statue of lead."⁷ William Charles Macready rarely performed the play, and although Charles Kemble's Romeo had been well received, he was better known for his Mercutio, the role he played when his daughter Fanny made her theatrical debut to great acclaim as Juliet in 1829. There were notable nineteenth-century Juliets, such as Adelaide Neilson and Helen Faucit, but the part of Romeo was coming to be perceived as problematic for leading tragic actors.

In the event, the role and Shakespeare's play was restored to the repertory by a woman, the great American actress Charlotte Cushman, playing Romeo as a breeches part in her production at the Haymarket in 1845, with her sister, Susan,

playing Juliet. Cushman excised most of Garrick's additions and restored Rosaline, but not Shakespeare's wordplay; her textual cuts served on the whole to enhance Romeo's role still further. It was a theatrical triumph and critics were unanimous in their praise:

It is enough to say that the Romeo of Miss Cushman is far superior to any Romeo that has been seen for years. The distinction is not one of degree, it is one of kind. For a long time Romeo has been a convention. Miss Cushman's Romeo is a creative, a living, breathing, animated, ardent, human being. The memory of play-goers will call up Romeo as a collection of speeches delivered with more or less eloquence, not as an individual. Miss Cushman has given the vivifying spark, whereby the fragments are knit together, and become an organized entirety.⁸

A number of productions followed Cushman's success. Edwin Booth's for the 1869 opening night of Booth's Theater, New York, proved a great popular success with its spectacular decor:

Picturesque Italian streets, luxurious gardens, gay and bright interiors, and the solemn, cypress-shaded precincts of the tomb unite in the ever-changing picture, and create such an absorbing illusion that the spectator of the loves, happiness, sorrow, and wretched fate of Romeo and Juliet may follow them with a sense of their reality and nearness as if he were indeed living in a remote past, walking about the streets and partaking of the current experience of Verona and Mantua three hundred years ago.⁹

Henry Irving's production at the Lyceum in 1882 was similarly magnificent:

This was the market-place place at Verona, busy with its buying and selling. Donkeys, children, a picturesque conduit on the centre stage, a sloping bridge in the background, life, animation, and color, groupings all admirably arranged and studied, presented themselves to the expectant gaze.¹⁰

Henry James was less complimentary about the acting: "Mr Irving is not a Romeo; Miss Terry is not a Juliet; and no one else save Mrs Stirling [playing the Nurse], is anything in particular."¹¹ George Bernard Shaw was no more enthusiastic about Johnston Forbes-Robertson's 1895 revival at the Lyceum with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Juliet in which he found the actors miscast and the production tame: "Mr Forbes Robertson has evidently no sympathy for Shakespeare's love of a shindy: you see his love of law and order coming out in his stage management of the fighting scenes."¹²

Reaction against visually spectacular productions came with William Poel and the Elizabethan Stage Society, dedicated to producing Shakespeare's plays, employing full texts and original staging conditions as far as possible. The

venture was not a financial success, but its influence on a new generation of directors was long-lasting and profound. *Romeo and Juliet* was the Society's final production in 1905 and Poel cast two teenage unknowns, Esmé Percy and Dorothy Minto, in the lead roles. The production lasted only four performances and not everyone was convinced—the *Academy's* reviewer adverted to the Romantic notion that Shakespeare can never adequately translate from study to stage¹³—but the critic J. C. Trewin recognized its significance and found that “for the first time it became endurable. I sat at it with Granville Barker* ... the lovers, instead of cold technique, brought the ardour of extreme youth.”¹⁴

John Gielgud brought many of Poel's ideas on simple staging, fast-moving action, and simple verse-speaking to his productions of the play at the Oxford University Dramatic Society in 1932 and the Old Vic in 1935. In the Oxford production, Gielgud cast male students against Peggy Ashcroft as Juliet and Edith Evans as the Nurse. These two reprised their roles in the Old Vic production in which Gielgud and Laurence Olivier alternated the roles of Romeo and Mercutio. The critic James Agate recognized that “The difficulty of producing plays written for the Elizabethan and transferred to the picture stage must always be resolved by compromise, which means that good and bad must go hand in hand.” In his view, the good in this production was that “it enabled that fiery-footed steed which is this tragedy to gallop sufficiently apace”; the bad was that the permanent set, designed to avoid scene changes, was cumbersome, so that “the action seemed to take place not so much in Verona as in a corner of it.” He also found fault with the lighting—“gone were the sun and warmth of Italy and the whole thing happened at night, the tomb scene being the cheerfullest of all!” while “The costumes were charming, even if the football jerseys of the rival factions reminded us less of Montague and Capulet than of Wanderers and Wolves.”¹⁵

Critics expressed reservation concerning individual performances, but most were agreed that, overall, Gielgud's production “brings out to the full the cruelty of the lovers' fate.”¹⁶ *The Times* thought the production's “principal fascination” lay in “Miss Peggy Ashcroft's Juliet [in which] art and temperament perpetually seem to be moving hand in hand. Her performance is memorable for the exquisite naturalness with which it holds the character to the plane of poetry.”¹⁷ Edith Evans' Nurse was similarly admired: “Miss Edith Evans, as the Nurse, is a grand piece of nature to the fingertips;... Her performance alone would make it imperative to see this revival.”¹⁸ Odious as comparisons might be, in this case they were inevitable, and most agreed with Agate: “Mr Olivier's Romeo showed himself very much in love but rather butchered the poetry, whereas Mr Gielgud carves the verse ... exquisitely ... Yet is this Romeo ever really in love with anybody except himself?”¹⁹

Peter Brook's 1947 production at the Shakespeare Memorial theatre in Stratford was described in *The Times* as a “recklessly spectacular version ... which sacrifices poetry, acting, and even the story itself, to pictorial splendour.”²⁰

However, individual performances were praised:

Paul Scofield's magnetic Mercutio and Myles Eason's superbly feline Tybalt were outstanding ... Beatrix Lehmann's Nurse was a striking performance, sufficiently vulgar and sentimental to provide a proper background for Juliet without stealing her scenes. Laurence Payne's Romeo was virile, even violent, but it lacked subtlety and variety ... Daphne Slater's Juliet was young and fresh, and she was successful in conveying the pathos of the role, but she has not yet the resources for the highest moments, and her big scenes lacked variety.²¹



1. Peter Brook's 1947 production: Paul Scofield as Mercutio, Laurence Payne as Romeo, and John Harrison as Benvolio.

The problem, as ever, was finding leading actors who looked sufficiently young to be credible in the parts while experienced enough to do them justice.

In 1960 Franco Zeffirelli, the anglophile Italian designer and director who had established his reputation in critically acclaimed productions of Italian opera at Covent Garden in the late 1950s, was invited to direct *Romeo and Juliet* for the Old Vic Company. His shows were characterized by "naturalism," narrative simplicity, and beautiful sets. This was his first Shakespeare play. He wanted to appeal to a young audience and to bring out the passion of the play. He cut everything that he regarded as extraneous, which didn't add to the play's narrative drive, including Servants, Musicians, Petrarchan exchanges early in the play, narrative accounts of events that the audience had seen, Friar Laurence's advice, as well as numerous individual lines, and much of the last two acts. In total he cut about a thousand lines, roughly one third of the text, and concentrated on delivering a romantic, fast-paced production.²² The production

introduced Judi Dench as Juliet and John Stride as Romeo. Critics were struck by its freshness and vitality: “Last Tuesday at the Old Vic a foreign director approached Shakespeare with fresh eyes, quick wits and no stylistic preconceptions; and what he worked was a miracle.” Kenneth Tynan goes on to detail the features which produced its success and to rebut critics nostalgic for a more traditional approach:

The characters were neither larger nor smaller than life; they were precisely life-size, and we watched them living, spontaneously and unpredictably. The director had taken the simple and startling course of treating them as if they were real people in a real situation; and of asking himself just how those people, in that situation would behave. It sounds obvious enough; yet the result ... is a revelation, even perhaps a revolution. Nobody on stage seems to be aware that he is appearing in an immortal tragedy, or indeed in a tragedy of any kind; instead, the actors behave like ordinary human beings, trapped in a quandary whose outcome they cannot foretell. Handled thus realistically, it is sometimes said, Shakespeare’s essential quality gets lost. I passionately demur. What gets lost is not Shakespeare but the formal, dehumanized stereotype that we have so often made of him.²³

“Meaning and character were wedded,” he concludes, “and out of their interaction poetry arose. The production evoked a whole town, a whole riotous manner of living, so abundant and compelling was the life on stage that I could not wait to find out what happened next. The Vic has done nothing better for a decade.”²⁴ The production was a huge box-office success and went on to tour the world. Zeffirelli drew on his experience of staging this production when making his popular and influential 1968 film version.

Numbers of productions of *Romeo and Juliet* have increased dramatically in recent years—the RSC alone has mounted fifteen at Stratford since Brook’s in 1947, which are discussed in detail below. The play’s continuing popularity is due to the archetypal appeal of its stark, tragic plot and youthful protagonists, which educationalists believe likely to engage the sympathies of a young audience, and hence to its frequent inclusion in school syllabuses. The nature of the plot has also made it ideal for updating and adapting to a range of different cultural scenarios, from Prague in 1963, to East Berlin in 1981 and Canada in Robert LePage’s 1991 bilingual *Roméo et Juliette* with francophone Capulets and anglophone Montagues.²⁵

While capitalizing on inherent dramatic possibilities, setting the play in politically explosive situations can skew the text, as Katherine Duncan-Jones points out in her review of Tim Supple’s 2000 production at the National Theatre in which Montagues were black and Capulets white:

The racial differentiation of the Capulets and Montagues turns out to throw this well constructed play badly off balance. Their “ancient

grudge” no longer looks like pointless prolonged feuding between families whose culture and ambitions are identical, for it appears to derive from antagonisms between races that are all too recognizable, and recognizably intransigent.²⁶

Nevertheless, she concludes, in practice, “different-race casting has surprisingly little effect.”

Over the course of four centuries, the play has undergone translation and transformation not only to new settings but across different languages and media, including “[m]ore than thirty operas ... ranging from Benda’s and Schwanenberger’s (both dated 1776) to ... Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette* (1867).”²⁷ The best known and most popular is Leonard Bernstein’s *West Side Story*, which locates the story in late twentieth-century New York. Famous ballets were choreographed to the music of Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev. Douglas Lanier lists film and television adaptations from Merchant Ivory’s *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965), set in India, to the Marvel Comics’ *Uncanny X-Men volume 5: She Lies with Angels* (2004).²⁸

Romeo and Juliet has been one of the most frequently filmed of Shakespeare’s plays. A number of silent versions were shot between 1902 and 1926 and several sound versions before Irving Thalberg and George Cukor’s 1936 Hollywood production with Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard in the title roles, and Renato Castellani’s Anglo-Italian version of 1954. The best known, most successful, and most widely available films are Franco Zeffirelli’s 1968 version and Baz Luhrmann’s of 1996. Zeffirelli’s film was a logical extension of his 1960 stage production. His determination to popularize Shakespeare had resulted in the immensely successful 1966 film version of *The Taming of the Shrew* with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Two years later he filmed *Romeo and Juliet* and, as Jill Levenson explains, “Conceptualising the film, Zeffirelli repeated his earlier methods in theory and practice. This time, of course, he was able to carry many cinematic ideas to their logical conclusions.”²⁹ Both Zeffirelli’s and Luhrmann’s films are visually brilliant but quite different in setting and filmic approach. Zeffirelli re-creates medieval Verona, whereas Luhrmann transports the scene to Verona Beach, a suburb in modern-day America:

[Zeffirelli’s] film is melodramatic and linear, highlighting the role of fate and the sense that the story of *Romeo and Juliet* could not have ended differently. Luhrmann’s interpretation of Shakespeare’s text, on the other hand, pays homage not only to the primary source, but also to filmic versions that came before. However, Luhrmann’s depiction of the two young lovers, Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, marks a definitive departure from Zeffirelli’s in that his two young lovers are more grounded and reflective and show more of an inner maturity and strength of character; his depiction of adolescence through these two characters is more worldly. Luhrmann’s *Romeo and Juliet* makes

much use of flashback and flashforward to add to the drama of the script. His style suggests irony and downplays the role of fate in the story.³⁰

Both films have attracted much critical attention, not all of it favorable. Luhrmann's in particular has raised critical hackles: "Can Shakespeare's tragedy withstand the shock of the modern and the playful inventiveness of such postmodern tomfoolery as this movie employs? It's a judgment call at best."³¹ For others, though, it was a brilliant opening up of Shakespeare to a young audience.



2. Gangs in a modern "Verona Beach": Mercutio (Harold Perrineau) reaches for Romeo's (Leonardo DiCaprio) gun (trademark "Sword") in Baz Luhrmann's 1996 movie *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*.

AT THE RSC

Often the search for a socially relevant context for the story of two young lovers caught in the crossfire of their parents rivalry leads directors to try and find a motive for their ancient grudge, whether it's race, religion or color. I've seen black Montagues and white Capulets, protestant and catholic, Israeli and Arab and famously the Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks in West Side New York ... However many times the play is done, whatever slant is put upon it, whether enlightening or obstructive, the play itself, the text, will always be there.³²

The frequency with which *Romeo and Juliet* has been performed has led to problems, which critics, who brace themselves for another retread of the famous tragedy, are quick to pick up on. How to make it different, how to give it a new relevance when a production is put on every few years, challenges every director and actor coming to the play. It is interesting when reading interviews with actors that they usually claim never to have seen a production of *Romeo and Juliet* before taking it on. How is this possible, one wonders! The baggage that comes

with the play, the past “definitive” productions, performances, and film versions obviously weigh heavily. In 2004 Matthew Rhys, who played Romeo, worried that the audience would be “disappointed when they see I don’t look like Leonardo DiCaprio!”³³

Productions since the 1960s have taken a definite shift toward seeking out an emotional and psychological truth behind the characters. Performances of Romeo are often referred to as “Hamlet in love,”³⁴ the excitement and passion of love mixed with a deep melancholy fatalism. Juliets have become more sexually aware, and have been portrayed as the more dominant of the couple, driving the relationship forward. Mercutio’s scathing words about love and his rash actions are sometimes attributed to an unrequited homosexual desire for Romeo. Directors have focused on darker elements in the play: violence, hate, and fatalism. Due to the very nature of the story, directors wish to make the play fresh and accessible. A play which appeals to, and is still amazingly relevant for young people, it is often a chosen text for schools, and a first introduction to Shakespeare on the stage. And this, too, one senses, is at the back of every director’s mind.

In terms of theatrical interpretation since the middle of the twentieth century, Verona has become more of a living city and less of a Renaissance ideal, the bawdy humor has been given freer expression, and the lovers are now measured by the standards of modern young people rather than a poetic and artistic ideal... However, the situations and behavior of the protagonists can seem to echo modern preoccupations in ways that enliven and fuel performances and engage young audiences.³⁵

In Fair Verona We Set Our Scene?

Directors have not often chosen to make reference to an Italianate setting, despite the very specific locale of the play. Creating a coherent community and appropriate atmosphere for the play’s action has become more important when representing the play for a modern audience. This less specific attention to Italian references demonstrates an emphasis on the accessibility of the play. Some productions have made very clear distinctions in the hierarchical structure of the Veronese society, whereas others have done away with this altogether. The importance of the society in shaping the destiny of Romeo and Juliet, however, cannot be overestimated. A modern setting obviously makes the play more immediate, but does lead to questions as to why a young woman like Juliet would not run off with her lover and settle down in Mantua with him, when she has already defied her parents by marrying him. To contemporary audiences and theater critics since the 1960s, this has proved a continual stumbling block in the credibility of the plot. The setting is therefore extremely important in any

production of this play in making the plight of the lovers believable.

Michael Boyd's 1999 production, staged in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and designed by Tom Piper, avoided specific place and time by having an abstract set which fulfilled a symbolic purpose:

It was a non-specific design, basically two curving walls, facing each other, that could represent different things throughout the evening—whether they were the orchard walls that Romeo climbs, the wall under Juliet's balcony, or, more symbolically, a simple representation of the two families, ever present and immovably solid.³⁶

The simple but effective bleakness of the set was criticized by some critics who referred to it as a “hostile, inner-city multi-storey car-park.” However, the intensity of love was thrown into sharp relief in this threatening, violent and barren world: “Boyd placed the tragedy of love in a hostile environment, a bare platform with a runway down through the auditorium and two walls of plain wood curving into a ‘blind’ exit at the back of the stage.”³⁷ As well as symbolically representing the fissure in which the hate of the feuding families festers and Romeo and Juliet's love flourishes, the immovable curved walls appeared to symbolize tragic fate and the inevitability of tragedy for two people whose love could have brought harmony out of anarchy and violence.

Michael Attenborough's 1997 production staged in the Swan Theatre stripped the play of any pomp and the traditional class definitions associated with the socially powerful Montagues and Capulets. Attenborough believed:

it is a domestic play ... not a play of grand scale. I've got rid of the economic scale of the play in order to allow the scale of the emotions to come to the centre of the stage. I've stripped it of its grandeur in social and economic terms; there are no servants; it is simply about two families in a humble town in Northern Italy. I want to home in on the passionate centre of the play, create passion in the form of human love, and destructive passion in the social violence ... The most important thing about that world for us is its earthiness, its sensuality, its beauty, the simmering passion underneath the skin of the play, which sometimes is contained and at other times erupts. It can erupt in love, between Romeo and Juliet, or it can erupt in hate, between the Montagues and the Capulets.³⁸

Attenborough's focus on the play was as a domestic tragedy. Juliet was seen cooking for the ball, scrubbing clothes and beating carpets. The emphasis was on the sense of community and the way people interacted with each other in a constricted and intense environment. Designer Robert Jones explained:

We didn't want to do the play in Elizabethan period. Mike [Attenborough] referred a lot to the film of *The Godfather* and the early scenes of Bertolucci's film *1900* ... And that's where we got this

strong sense of community, people who worked on the land and the landowners. All the boys worked on the land. The first thing you see is them with scythes. Sharpening knives ... their tools later become weapons. It's very much set in a small community—tightly knit, houses opposite one another, and a general village square which everyone gravitates toward, like a market town ... The space has to be used as a bedroom, a kitchen, a square, a tomb, a church, Mantua. So it has to be multi-purpose ... The floor is a very strong anchor—red bricks, cobbles, drains. We decided that there would be a natural focus in the set—a low, brick rostrum ... It can be a bed, a table, a place to dance on. People fight on it and die on it ... I'm trying to get the feeling of heat. In the outdoor scenes the lighting is from very strong angles that catch the texture of the walls so you get the feeling of sunlight coming through alleyways. There's a tap where people fill buckets all the time. The boys throw water over themselves to cool off. It's quite an earthy production ... The boys are all in vests, braces, very high waist trousers, belts. Juliet is very much a village girl; barefoot and in long vest shaped dresses. All the fabrics are natural colors as they come from vegetable dyes.³⁹

The critic David Benedict recognized the production's intentions: "Robert Jones creates a wonderfully warm atmosphere ... Attenborough is at pains to point out the youthful physicality at the play's heart and uses the heat of the Verona sun to bring out sweat and sexuality. That in turn emphasizes the macho violence which shimmers like a heat haze about the characters."⁴⁰

Michael Bogdanov's influential modern-dress production in 1986 gave a highly politicized reading of the play in which children were used as commodities in a capitalist society gone mad. The tragedy of the couple stemmed from a community that placed its values on wealth and status ahead of love. A direct critique of Thatcherite philosophy, and the impact it can have on the souls of both parents and children, Bogdanov used *Romeo and Juliet* to show what life is reduced to when the people with power believe, in the words of Margaret Thatcher, that "there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first."⁴¹ It was, as scholar and academic Russell Jackson described,

Set in "a modern north Italian city, all brass and marble, sports cars, motor bikes, cycling clerics and hard-faced, swanky teenagers." Capulet (Richard Moore) had become a self-made tycoon ... It was implied that political and financial corruption were rife ... With the Montagues and Capulets locked in a Mafia-style rivalry, their children were at once privileged and confined in a manner that suits the play: ten years later Baz Luhrmann's film would use a similar social framework.⁴²

This air of corruption was carried on into Mantua, where “Romeo tangles with a city carnival and buys the poison under the comic-sinister gaze of huge masks of world leaders [Thatcher and Reagan].”⁴³

The production took a satirical view of the 1980s “yuppie” lifestyle:

As we enter the Stratford theatre, a rock group is playing mood-indigo music, a black guy is cruising round the marble-smooth stage on roller-skates and there is a pervasive whiff of black leather ... And, as Benvolio arrives on a motorbike and Tybalt turns up in the Veronese square in a low-slung red sports car, it becomes impossible not to dub this the *Alfa Romeo and Juliet*. Michael Bogdanov, in short, has set the play unequivocally in Verona 1986. The result is hip, cool, clever and witty ... he creates a complete society in which everyone has a defined place. Montagues and Capulets are rival families living under a Mafia prince with Capulet himself an urban predator working from a green-marble desk and staggeringly indifferent to his daughter’s welfare and his wife’s affair with cousin Tybalt. Capulet also throws some spectacular thrashes: at the big one, Tybalt essays [Andrew Lloyd Webber’s] *Memory* on the saxophone (thus becoming the Prince of “Cats”) and Mercutio, the original Gucci loafer, jives headlong into the pool with his partner.⁴⁴

The set had a cold angularity and rigid structure which, as *Romeo and Juliet* became aware of their entrapment in their society, resembled a gilded cage:



3. Sean Bean (right) as Romeo in Michael Bogdanov’s modern-dress (“yuppie”) production of 1986.

Chris Dyer’s Cubist-inspired set, a revolving central unity of white staircase and landings, is backed by changing photographic blow-ups, huge and grainy, of Sloanes, clones, copes and bits of architecture.⁴⁵

In the 1976 and 1989 RSC productions, the set design for Verona was minimalist

and without the detail that builds up a visual world of the play. Closer to Shakespeare's stage, it is the performances of the lead characters that will dominate or create the necessary atmosphere in which the play functions. In 1989, the bare structure of the Swan Theatre acted as the set for the play. Gregory Doran, Assistant Director on this production, explained:

We decided to adopt a version of Shakespeare's open stage for *Romeo and Juliet*. The actors would have to rely on the spoken word to create the scenery. Terry Hands began rehearsals by emphasizing how important words were to the Elizabethans. Nowadays, perhaps, the currency of words has been devalued by TV and film which relies on images not words for effect.⁴⁶

Surprising critics and audience, in 1976 the main stage of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre was adapted into the nearest approximation of an Elizabethan theater that could be met within the structural limits of the existing auditorium:

A shock awaits one as one enters the RST. At the back of the stage is a timbered, two-tiered balcony for spectators, below there is an inner recess and the stage itself thrust further into the auditorium than ever. It marks Stratford's most radical attempt yet to return to an Elizabethan model.⁴⁷

In this production, many critics mentioned John Woodvine's excellent performance as Capulet, in which he indicated that the violence of Veronese society emanated from the head of a feudal household, and from twisted parental control:

What also gave the end its strength was the emergence of Capulet, thanks to John Woodvine, as the source and fountain of the hate and violence that runs through the play. Hearing of Juliet's refusal to wed Paris, he hurls her intemperately to the floor; and even in the family vault he can't resist kicking Romeo's corpse and taking a dagger to the bungling Friar.⁴⁸

Stars Shine Darkly Over Me⁴⁹

The feel of a production is often dependent on the director's reading of how fated the lovers actually are. Many modern productions play heavily on the idea that the lovers are on an inescapable journey, hurtling toward their fate with a gothic sense of dread. In 1967, director Karolos Koun seized avidly on the word "fate":

Whether Shakespeare believed in fate or not, he used it theatrically. There's a current of hate that runs right through Verona that has to be got rid of. It's the old Greek theme of a sacrifice having to be made as an atonement. Out of the loins of these fatal enemies spring what the

Chorus calls “death-marked lovers.” They are made to love each other so that the city may be cleansed of blood. It’s a very beautiful and moving pattern.⁵⁰



4. Trevor Nunn’s 1976 production: John Woodvine as Capulet, furious in the face of his daughter’s refusal to marry the man he has chosen for her, with Francesca Annis as Juliet, Marie Kean as her Nurse, and Barbara Shelley as her mother.

In the play, Romeo expresses an almost supernatural awareness of his own destiny. In Koun’s production, Ian Holm played Romeo as intensely aware of the ominous nature of his uncontrollable love:

The lovers’ tragedy is complicated by differences in temperament—Romeo “a man of uncertain responsibility” ... and Juliet, practical, far-seeing, committed. And it is further complicated by Romeo’s sense of a tragic destiny hanging over him in the stars: “I am sure he’s got a feeling that it is not going to work out right,” Holm says.⁵¹

As one critic described:

In the last agonising moments of the balcony scene—when Juliet asks: “Thinkest thou we shall meet again?” Ian Holm, short, vigorous, modern, the very antithesis of the traditional swooning Romeo, replies: “I doubt it.” There is a pause before he completes the line to reassure Juliet, and adds the word “not.” So Shakespeare’s line “I doubt it not” with its following words “And all those woes shall serve for sweet discourses in our times to come,” is subtly rearranged. For this Romeo is a pessimistic fellow, torn apart and troubled deeply in his soul. He has no confidence in any future for their love. In the last scenes of the play, as all his fears are confirmed, he rushes gladly toward death with a sort of elation, delivering his last words “I die”

with a relief that is oddly anti-climactic. The destructive and bitter violence of Verona's continuing feud between the Capulets and the Montagues is certainly a likely source of Romeo's revulsion with life, with the "death wish" suggested in Ian Holm's moving and at times powerful performance.⁵²

Similarly, in 1989:

Mark Rylance's excellent Romeo ... seems death-haunted from the start. This is not just a moody Petrarchan dreamer but a man "whipped and tormented" by his love for Rosaline and given to a shy, nervous stammer. Even his passion for Juliet has a doomed intensity: at one poignant moment they simply stare at each other in wordless rapture and Friar Laurence virtually has to prise them apart with a crowbar to get them to the altar. Mr Rylance delivers all the lines hinting at the operation of fate ("O, I am Fortune's fool") with the quiet certainty of someone aware that happiness is a frail and perilous affair. It adds up to a pensively intelligent study of a man "wedded to calamity."⁵³

When they meet at the ball ... time seems to stand still. The other guests are freeze-framed in a rich amber radiance, while the two lovers converse and take their first kiss under a cone of harder, whitish light. Both romantic and oddly premonitory, this stage picture gives a subtle hint that the two youngsters have been picked out (or on) by Fate.⁵⁴

Michael Boyd's production in 2000 brought to life this sense of gothic and numinous dread that underpins the play. Helped by David Tennant's strong performance as the ill-fated Romeo, the production worked effectively as a ghostly retread of the events of the tragedy. Trapped in a state of limbo, the lovers, with the play's other victims, are doomed to relive their tale, observers and yet participants in an apparently never-ending tragic cycle:

It struck me very early on that Romeo had a fairly well developed sense of the world of fate and destiny. He talks of his dreams and makes numerous references to the stars and what lies in them ... The first explicit reference I found was his justification for not going to the Capulet ball by saying "I dreamt a dream tonight" ... I began to wonder what this dream he had had could be, and the answer came from an idea of Michael Boyd's to have Romeo speak the Prologue.

Two households, both alike in dignity

In fair Verona, where we lay our scene ... is one of those bits of Shakespeare that the audience can practically chant along with you ... Michael's idea was to have the Prologue spoken midway through

the first scene, so that it would cut through the street-fight and suspend the action; and he also wanted it to be spoken by Romeo. This wouldn't be the same Romeo that we would meet for the first time a few minutes later, however; this would be Romeo after his death, a spectre who could speak the Prologue with all the despair, resignation and even bitterness, of hindsight. As the action on stage was suspended, I could even address some of it to other characters in the play, so the lines

And the continuance of the parents' rage,

Which, but their children's end, naught could remove could be said directly to my father, who was even then in the midst of a sword fight with Capulet ... It helped, I think, to confound audience expectation early on—something we'd always been keen to do ... This became Romeo's dream, this vision of himself walking through an all-too-familiar battlefield as a ghost of himself telling a story that would only make partial sense, but warned of a tragedy that would take his life. Indeed, as his story unfolded it would seem that this portent of doom was only becoming ever more inescapable.⁵⁵

In this production, the worlds of the living and the dead mingled. As characters died, their spirits emerged above the left-hand wall of the set, watching down upon and even influencing the action. For example, Mercutio handed down the poison to the Apothecary—an act of revenge fulfilling the “curse on both your houses” that will see the deaths of Romeo, Juliet, and the future hopes of the Montagues and Capulets. As Juliet contemplated the horrors of the tomb, building to a state of self-induced frenzy, Tybalt's ghost ran past her, on the lines “O look! Methinks I see my cousin's ghost / Seeking out Romeo that did spit his body / Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!” In this spine-tingling moment he emerged from the “blind” entrance at the back of the stage and exited through the auditorium, sprinting with a death's-head stare focused ahead on some unknown sight and purpose.

A sense of doom was also evoked by the dance at Capulet's ball, reminiscent of a dance of death, “an erotic dance in which the men simulate strangling their partners ... These lovers are not just star-crossed, they are positively cursed.”⁵⁶ As theater historian James N. Loehlin described:

many of Boyd's images were vivid and compelling. He depicted the violence depopulating Verona as literal plague, so that by the end of the play all the characters were wearing surgical masks to try and avoid infection. The presiding spirit of this Verona was not the Prince, an enervated old man hobbling on two canes, but rather Paris, a strapping, black-clad sadist, always accompanied by a band of armed retainers, who nearly raped Juliet in the Friar's cell. The final attempt to establish a “glooming peace” was a hollow one. While the families

wallowed in self-pity and made futile gestures of reconciliation, Romeo and Juliet emerged eerily from the tomb and walked out through the audience, noticed only by Friar Laurence. The diseased world of Verona was far from ready to receive or even understand them, and the play ended on a note of fatalism and despair.⁵⁷

Other devices and pieces of stage business not inherent in the text have been used by directors in order to indicate the inescapable hand of fate. In Terry Hands's 1973 production, the figure of the Apothecary took on an extra significance, very much in keeping with the play:

Hands's motto for the production was "these violent delights have violent ends"; he emphasized the speed and impulsiveness with which the lovers fling themselves into tragedy, as well as the cruel tricks of fate that hasten their doom. The Apothecary, a sinister embodiment of Destiny, brooded over crucial points of the action from a metal catwalk high over the stage.⁵⁸

A hooded figure takes up a position on [the] high bridge whenever ancient grudges break to new mutiny below. Presumably he is there to suggest Death brooding over the star-crossed lovers but his final identification as the Apothecary, though not exactly inappropriate, introduces a sharp touch of bathos.⁵⁹

Juliet's bed, often center stage, acts as an important symbol of birth, marriage, and death. The bed will often anticipate the furnishings of the family vault, so that the lovers will be seen lying together in the same position here and in the play's final sequence. In 1980, 1984, and 1997, the inclusion of Juliet's funeral reinforced the effect foreshadowed in Juliet's line just after meeting Romeo: "If he be married, / My grave is like to be my wedding bed."⁶⁰

Ever Fallen in Love with Someone (You Shouldn't've ...)⁶¹

The casting of the two central characters is essential to the success of the production. For the 1986 production Michael Bogdanov sensibly held auditions for the two leads on the same day so that it was evident from the start that the actors had the essential spark that could make the production work. However, many productions have been criticized for a lack of magnetism between the two leads. In 2004, the leads, "while admirable individually, are less exciting when together; and never suggest that they are overborne by sexual passion."⁶² And, in 1995 critic Michael Billington suggested the pair radiated "about as much sexual intensity as a couple in a Sunday school Bible class."⁶³ Regardless of the merits of a production, without a couple that can communicate, the nature of the lovers' relationship in the production will fail to engage the audience emotionally and convey their tragedy.

A sharp distinction is made in the play between the different attitudes to love expressed by individual characters: the pure love of Romeo and Juliet; Mercutio's view that relationships between the sexes are for sexual gratification only; and marriage as a means to social position and standing in the community, as made clear by the Capulets' hopes for their daughter.

The Capulets, in Michael Bogdanov's production, saw Paris as a financial bargain, with Juliet as a tool to social standing and wealth:

Shakespeare ends *Romeo and Juliet* with the pious thought that the lovers' deaths have patched up the family feud. That is not how Michael Bogdanov sees the events, which he presents as an irreconcilable clash between the forces of affection and property. The key line is the friar's reproof to Juliet's parents: "The most you sought was her promotion." From the start the overbearing elders treat their young like walking investments; when disaster strikes it is as though their shares have taken a tumble.⁶⁴

Niamh Cusack, who played Juliet, realized:

What makes Romeo and Juliet's love so vivid ... is the contrast with the hatred between the families. Juliet is not so much rebelling against her parents as discovering her own values. They don't include "making a good match," love as a business transaction to increase the power of her family.⁶⁵

This is a world of rich kids, fixed marriages and tough deals where, when two people meet, it's business at first sight; and for once Bogdanov creates a real sense that, by falling in love, Romeo and Juliet are defying the local customs ... But all this Bogdanovian invention builds to a point which is that young love is as vulnerable as it ever was to parental exploitation and cruelty: more so since Richard Moore's crude tycoon of a Capulet is ready to slap his daughter around to get his way. And after the two lovers are safely dead (Romeo, incidentally, expires by shooting up after a peculiarly creepy encounter with a Mantuan fixer), they are instantly transformed into gold statues before which the survivors smilingly pose for the paparazzi. Renaissance tragedy is transformed into social critique.⁶⁶

Significantly, James N. Loehlin pointed out how:

In the latter half of the twentieth century, *Romeo and Juliet* was transformed, in production and perception, from a play about love into a play about hate. Modern productions have tended to emphasize the feud over the love story, and have used it to comment on a variety

of social ills.⁶⁷

However, it is the very nature of the society and the feud which often throws the lovers' emotional life into sharp relief. This was especially true in Michael Boyd's production in 2000, in which "the idea seems to be to show the violence and morbidity endemic in Shakespeare's world and thereby intensify the romance which takes place in a deathward-bound *vale of tears*".⁶⁸

Zoë Waites played Juliet to much acclaim in Michael Attenborough's 1997 production. In this Verona, where "emotions are raw and likely to run amok,"⁶⁹ she emphasized the sexual awakening which comes with Juliet's experience of true love:

I think it should be incredibly sexy, that they're completely desperate for one another. Juliet hasn't had a sexual relationship before so there's all the fear of that. Fear and excitement. Wanting but not knowing.⁷⁰

In this production, the audience were

reminded constantly that this is a play about the connection between sexuality and death. Both are pursued with orgasmic intensity in this hot, passionate world, and the link is made most evident in Zoë Waites's remarkable Juliet. This is a girl who, judging by the lascivious way she dances with Paris or the manner in which she rolls round her bed saying she is "possessed but not yet enjoyed," is carnally desperate.⁷¹

Juliet dances a tango with Paris to non-tango music; but the production makes a virtue of this as she sees Romeo, because the music is suddenly peeled away into a quiet hum, and we watch Juliet still dancing this elaborate tango (a real Argentino one, not the campy ballroom version, with heavenly sensuous details of footwork) as if suspended in time, as if the only music for her now is her new interest in Romeo, whom she keeps trying to regard, this way or that, over Paris's shoulder.⁷²

Likewise, her Romeo, Ray Fearon, was "an intense, muscular Romeo, totally at the mercy of his hormonal overload, careering from one impetuous deed to the next."⁷³ In this earthy interpretation, Romeo and Juliet were not portrayed as "romantic" ideals but real, vital, and passionate people. Fearon interpreted Romeo's feelings as those usually experienced in adolescence, and gave full credence to the fact that these two characters are in love—not a doomed love, but a love which could have lasted, as many relationships between many childhood sweethearts do:

It's that point when you're about sixteen—I remember it myself—and

you start thinking about the universe and yourself and your existence and the thing that's triggered that off could be a relationship, someone you've broken up with. And that happened to me and you don't understand fully what's going on.... The love is real for Romeo. It's that point in his life that is special, when you make that transition, when you just go, "right, this is it." Everything else stops. You've fallen in love and you try to talk to people about it and they don't want to, or they make fun of you ... Some people play the tragedy before the tragedy happens but I think what we should aim for is to make the audience believe that this relationship is going to work. You have to play the scenes as they are, be in the moment all the time, believe you're not going to die.⁷⁴

The common conception of "soppiness" in the lovers' wooing is a fallacy which directors have been keen to remedy. The words of Romeo and Juliet ring out true and strong, often in perfect poetry, contrasting strongly with the language of those around them. As Gregory Doran pointed out: "When Romeo and Juliet first meet they are so delighted, they create a perfect sonnet between them, sharing the lines and matching each other's rhymes."⁷⁵

The possibility of harmony and peace in Verona is glimpsed in the very language that the couple use. The importance of having actors who express the strength of true love cannot be underestimated. There is a tendency for reviewers to believe that any emotions felt in adolescence cannot be genuine, lasting or significant, and reductively ascribe the tragedy to the vagaries of a dodgy postal system. For all its lighter moments, what Shakespeare presents us with is a disturbed society in which love cannot function. All relationships are twisted in subtle and insidious ways, except one, and it is this that elevates this couple above their parents and peers. Regardless of setting, when the casting is right, *Romeo and Juliet* remains one of Shakespeare's most heart-wrenching and poignant tragedies; when done badly, as reviewers point out, it can make for a very long night in the theater.

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT: INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL ATTENBOROUGH

Michael Attenborough, born in 1950 to a distinguished theatrical family, graduated from Sussex University in 1972 and worked as associate director at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester, from 1972 to 1974. He was artistic director of the Leeds (now West Yorkshire) Playhouse from 1974 to 1979, associate director of the Young Vic from 1979 to 1980, artistic director of the Palace Theatre Watford from 1980 to 1983, and director of the Hampstead Theatre from 1984 to 1989, which won twenty-three awards during his tenure. In 1989 he was appointed artistic director of the Turnstyle Group in the West End, and then, in 1990, Resident director and executive producer of the Royal Shakespeare Company, becoming principal associate director in 1996. In July 2002 he was appointed artistic director of London's Almeida Theater. He is also joint vice-chairman of

the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and an honorary associate artist of the RSC. Originally seen as specializing in directing new writing, he rapidly established himself as a sensual, non-flashy director of Shakespeare's plays. He directed *Romeo and Juliet* for the RSC in 1997 with Ray Fearon as Romeo and Zoë Waites as Juliet.

How do you deal with the fact that this is such a famous love story, and get around the many preconceptions that the audience are bound to bring to the play?

I had something very particular that I wanted to investigate in the play and, interestingly, you put your finger on it in the question: I don't think it's a love story. There is hardly a profound, romantic, explored relationship. These are two kids who are as horny as hell and who can't wait to get their hands on each other. So I think it's a play about passion, not a play about love. That may not sound like a huge shift, but I think it *is* quite big. I think it's a play about both the positive and creative elements of passion *and* its destructive and violent elements. I had to find a world in which the dividing line between brawling and knifing somebody and having an illicit sexual relationship was almost invisible; one in which I could move from one to the other almost seamlessly. So I needed an environment in which heat—in some sense metaphorical, in some sense literal—was at the center of the event. We were not particularly interested in romance or love. Love of course emerges out of it, but what should sweep the audience away is the passion within the society. Again and again in the play, death is expressed in sexual terms and sex is expressed in terms of death. Sex and death are terribly close; in fact, “dying” is the slang term for having an orgasm, so you have in that one juxtaposition the positive and negative elements of passion sitting right next to each other.

I wanted a society that was not nearly so hierarchical as is conventionally portrayed and I wanted it very elemental, very earthy, very simple. I set it in a Tuscan peasant village about ten years into the twentieth century. If you've ever been to any of those French, Italian or Spanish villages in the hills in the heat of the day there's always two or three old folk sitting around, a man in a beret and a woman all in black, probably with a basket of flowers or fruit, just nodding off, a little kid playing around, some lads on motorcycles. That was the feel we had. The crickets chirping around the old folk, and then slowly the lads drift on and a fight starts. The lads were in those quite thick rural trousers, collarless shirts, braces, big boots that would withstand a lot of agricultural work. The girls were in long skirts, but right down off the shoulders, cleavages to the fore. Other than Escalus, nobody had any money, so the line at the end of the play “I will raise her statue in pure gold” wasn't taken literally; it meant “this will be the most precious thing in the village.” The atmosphere was very machismo, hot, flash, quick-tempered.

I actually started the production with their funeral. They were carried on in a very heavy, Catholic funeral and laid down on slabs in exactly the positions they would be in at the end of the play. Escalus spoke the Prologue over their dead bodies. It seemed to me that in effect Shakespeare was saying that these kids were so driven that their inevitable destiny was death, self-destruction. I wanted that sense of predestination, which Shakespeare clearly intended.

What did you do about the Chorus? An actor with no other lines? A doubled role?

I gave the Chorus to the actor that played Escalus. Actually, in effect he wasn't a chorus. He was Escalus doing a soliloquy. When Escalus arrives he's almost like a *deus ex machina*: he walks in and takes control of events, or attempts to. So his authority socially was reflected in his authority theatrically.

Did you have a particular way of distinguishing between Montagues and Capulets—visually, stylistically?

No. The play makes it so clear that you grasped who was who very quickly. And in our production they were people who couldn't afford much, so they didn't have the choice of, say, wearing distinctive clothing.

They don't call each other "Lady" Capulet or "Lady" Montague in the play, only in the cast list. They don't have to be Ladies and Gentlemen. So the only hierarchy was the enmity which existed between the Montagues and the Capulets. In a funny kind of a way, that age-old vendetta, where no one really understands why it began, is very believable in a village context amongst the peasantry, in a way more so than in aristocratic families. They are hemmed in together, rubbing shoulder to shoulder, can't avoid bumping into each other in streets and alleyways. The fights were done with farming implements: machetes, scythes. There was a wonderful fight that Terry King [Fight Director] put together, and when Mercutio got involved he was clearly much cleverer than Tybalt or any of the others, and all he fought with was a broom. Tybalt was slashing away with a vicious-looking machete, and because Mercutio is just that little bit quicker and sharper, suddenly he'd be behind Tybalt, poking him with the broom! There was no social etiquette, it was about passion and people who would encounter it very quickly.

Several of the characters, most notably the Nurse, are often played as a particular stereotype (Nurse usually quite old, garrulous, often a cheerful fat lady)—did you try to get away from this?

She was cheerful, and, if Sandra [Voe] will allow me, very sexy! I wanted her to be like a great mate of the Capulets. They were not people who could lord it over the Nurse. She was dressed all in black, clearly a widow who'd lost her husband early, she maybe lived two doors down; they've got a child and she doesn't have kids so she comes in and helps. She's much earthier, free from any responsibility of being a parent. She was completely bananas about Juliet, but she wasn't the

inappropriate, slightly eccentric servant, she was really like a neighbor. In a sense, we upped her status and made her a much more ordinary human being. In different ways we did that with Friar Laurence as well: rather than him being the rather bumbling, well-intentioned fellow he is often presented as, we made him a real rustic priest. When we encountered him in that first speech, he wasn't wandering along with a posy, he'd got his sleeves rolled up—he'd been out in an allotment growing things. And when, in the second half, Romeo's bemoaning his banishment in a rather self-pitying, indulgent way, Friar Laurence hit him, just beat him about to wake him up, in a way that an urban priest would never do. They [Nurse and Friar] were both ordinary people. One had the status of being a very good mum, the other had the status of being a very good priest. But they were part of a community who knew each other extremely well.

Do you see the play as a battle of the generations as much as a battle between rival households?

You see, in all walks of life, different demands and energies separate different generations. We were teenagers once, we were like that, now our job is to be grown-ups and to preach the benefits of some order and control. The sense of difference between generations is that the younger generation are out of control, and the elders frantically try and bring them under control. I do think that the Capulet/Juliet scene is wonderful because he's clearly panicking: he's suddenly realized that this is no longer a little girl, this is a woman with her own feelings (in my view, Juliet is a lot tougher than Romeo) and she stands up to him, and he's *shocked* and he goes way over the top. It's as if the younger generation, because of their passions and because of their sudden maturity, are out of control and the older generation are powerless to help them. It wasn't a generational battle so much as the endless cycle of life.

The play seems to subvert the age-old idea of the boy as the sexual desiring figure, the girl as the one who is desired. Were you and your Juliet surprised by how active and sexually energized she is?

It was certainly one of the keys in rehearsals, which is why I cast Zoë [Waites], because she's a very spunky, earthy actress. Temperamentally, Zoë's not particularly English: there's nothing dainty about Zoë, she's a middle-class girl but her instincts are toward the earth as opposed to the intellect, although she's ferociously bright. So she was the perfect Juliet for me. She had a fantastic feel for the language, which reflects the character who paints her world incredibly vividly. You get the sense very quickly of a girl with tremendous emotional strength and, perhaps even more important, imagination. I think Romeo's imagination is much more stilted and limited. She tends to see the cup half-full and he doesn't always. There's no question one of the joys of Juliet is that there's nothing passive or ladylike about her and it makes her very attractive. When the play starts and Romeo's already in love with Rosaline you see him shift from an idealized, romanticized, unrequited love, which was in lots of ways the literary

tradition that Shakespeare had inherited, to something that just swept him off his feet. It was like he was being gravitationally pulled into Juliet's world. He changes, I think, in the play. She forces him to grow up.

How did you approach the ages of the lovers? The text doesn't give Romeo a particular age, but it's very explicit about Juliet being thirteen (and that's a problem in our time, isn't it?).

It's pretty explicit. Ray [Fearon] and Zoë were still young: in their twenties. I didn't in any way try to get Zoë to pretend to be fourteen because you end up with something rather twee and not very helpful to the actor. What's exciting theatrically is seeing people discover things for the first time. If you can get that to be real—that they were encountering things for the very first time—that made them young. Of course, one of the great things that we get from two passionate actors like Ray and Zoë is huge energy and emotional and linguistic power, so you have to excite the audience's imagination through the character rather than try and make the actor look younger.

How did you stage the ball and the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet? It must be quite a challenge to provide intense focus on just the two of them when they are on a crowded stage in the midst of a noisy dance.



5. Ray Fearon as Romeo and Zoë Waites as Juliet in Michael Attenborough's 1997 production.

In terms of the story of the play, right from the word go I wanted the sense that we were building toward this party. It took place in what was in effect the village square. In the middle of the square there was a rectangular platform which was used as the place where the bodies were laid at the end of the play, as the bed when they were in bed together, and as a fountain-cum-stand where the boys would lounge around. In the middle of it we had a section which pulled out and revealed a fire, and you could hang a bowl above it to cook pasta. So the Nurse is actually preparing, with Lady Capulet, the meal for the big party that is going to happen in the square, with rows of colored bulbs around. She was literally rolling

fresh pasta, and when she did the speech about carrying the baby in her arms she'd just pick up this load of pasta and hold it in her arms as the baby. When Juliet entered, she was running in from the fields where she'd been picking herbs, which she put into the pot, and you could actually smell the pasta being cooked. So it was again very earthy: no social pretension, social graces, middle-class manners. There was a lot of dancing—flamboyant, sexy, great fun, everybody getting drunk quite quickly: a real sense of a village community.

It is a challenge to stage their meeting. I did something very simple, which is that when Romeo and Juliet were either looking at or speaking to each other, I went into an almost entire freeze with everybody else, took their lights down to 20 per cent, pushed Romeo and Juliet's up to 100 per cent, and played their scene. I've watched productions before where, suddenly, by some strange coincidence, everybody exits on a conga, conveniently leaving the stage for just the length of their dialogue! Surely the point is that it is not that easy? They have to talk to each other in a certain way because people could be watching.

The other thing I did in that scene was to foreground the notion that the whole thing is happening in order to pair Juliet off with Paris. Paris is nearly often cast as wet, which always strikes me as a bit daft; it's actually much more interesting if you've got a really good-looking man playing Paris, but she wants the other guy. It becomes really interesting then. I did get a very handsome young Paris [Oliver Fox], and he and Juliet did this sexy, passionate period dance, which we choreographed in such a way that although their bodies were incredibly close together her eyes never left Romeo. This was before either of them had said two words to each other. There's something sexy about that. It's one of those strange things about a quite stern Catholic environment in which sexual mores are very particularly mapped out, and young girls aren't allowed out without a chaperone, that when you see them dancing it always seems terribly erotic. We made use of that, and Juliet and Paris were very good dancers, so everybody thought that they fancied each other, but in fact the erotic charge going through her body was for the man she saw standing on the side of the dance floor.

Juliet at her window—or balcony, as it became in David Garrick's eighteenth-century production—and Romeo below, then climbing up, is one of the most famous scenes in the history of world theater. How did you set about making it new, making it your own?

In the context of our setting, it was rather simple. There were no grand, high buildings, barely even a balcony. Somehow, because they could virtually touch each other by leaning over, clawing to try to get hold of each other, it took on its own power.

Because the set was all faded terra-cotta plasterwork and vines rotting in the sun, there was nothing grand or operatic about it, which I think is when it gets silly and clichéd and young kids start to giggle. If it's about two kids who can't wait to get into each other's arms, it takes on a different sensual atmosphere. I

think a huge amount is down to Romeo in that scene, and you can't get much earthier than Ray Fearon. He's a muscular, instinctive hunk of a black actor, brilliant with the language! It wasn't difficult. The location and context helped us so much to get rid of the clichés of the balcony scene.

The reconciliation of the households at the end: lasting peace or temporary union?

We went for a lasting peace. A lasting peace that was partly out of shame and partly out of exhaustion. Shakespeare's very clever in actually making a point in the first speech, of saying that nobody knows where this enmity has come from: "From ancient grudge break to new mutiny." So by the end they're going, "Does anybody remember why we are fighting?" I'm sure other directors have wanted to make it temporary, but I think it belittles the story because what you then say is that the death of their children is not worth much. Now, in my experience that's the most devastating thing that can ever happen. When things emerge to the parents that they never knew about, they think "How did we go so seriously wrong that we're only now, so many years later, discovering things about our children that they felt they had to keep from us?" But it doesn't necessarily mean the parents are bad parents, it's the younger generation wanting to assert their independence: "No, I run my own life, I don't need to run it by you." We wanted to play it as profoundly shocking that all these things had happened behind their backs. But there's also a curious feeling in the play, as if the intensity of their relationship has burnt them out, almost a self-destruct mechanism. In a funny kind of way, I think if there was something that was never going to last, it was Romeo and Juliet, and not necessarily the eventual peace between the two families.

There are certain human structures at the beginning of the play which get burst apart. I was fascinated by the relationship between Romeo, Benvolio, and Mercutio. There were two things I wanted to play on. One, that I think Mercutio and Romeo are flip-sides of the same coin: scratch a romantic and you'll find a cynic; scratch a cynic, you'll find a romantic. I think Romeo and Mercutio adore each other because of their unity of opposites. And those two, like a lot of very volatile, combustible relationships, need a third person that glues them together that they can play off; somehow, if that person wasn't there, they'd end up fighting. It's not a dramaturgical accident that Benvolio disappears after Mercutio dies. It's because he's lost his function; he can't just tag around after Romeo—that threesome's broken. In our show he was the last person to leave the stage after the big fight, he was completely wasted. Benvolio is very sweet, very loyal, but finally not as complete and interesting a human being as Mercutio and Romeo. But he was a vital part of the dynamic between the three of them. And that gets broken apart by Mercutio's death. Yet another character defined by passion.

DAVID TENNANT ON PLAYING ROMEO

David Tennant was born in 1971 and brought up in Scotland. He attended the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. His earliest theater work was with agitprop 7:84 Theatre Company, but he soon went on to establish his career in British theater, playing Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Antipholus of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*, and Jack Absolute in *The Rivals*, as well as Romeo in Michael Boyd's production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 2000 for the Royal Shakespeare Company and Nicholas Beckett in Joe Orton's *What the Butler Saw* for the National Theatre. He has also made a successful television career and is best known today for his incarnation as the tenth Doctor Who in the long-running and enormously popular BBC television series. He has also made numerous film appearances, notably as Barty Crouch Jr. in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. He returned to the RSC in 2007 to play the prince in *Hamlet* and Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

How old did you imagine your Romeo to be?

I think Alex [Gilbreath, who played Juliet] and I both felt we were at the far end of being able to get away with it, but it's more difficult for Juliet because her age is stated so explicitly. Strictly speaking, Romeo could be any age, in that there's no textual evidence to suggest exactly how old he is, but of course there's something in the character which suggests teenage angst and perhaps hotheadedness. I didn't focus too specifically on an age because I was twenty-nine when I did it, and I didn't want to spend the whole production feeling like I was trying to play a teenager. I didn't want that to be my focus. So I kept it, even to myself, slightly vague. I suppose I thought of him as a young man, and beyond that I didn't spend too much time worrying about exactly how old he was. I think as human beings we tend not to focus on what age we are when we're having whatever experiences it is that we're having. So I tried not to make it too big an issue, which was perhaps partly my own fear of being slightly too old to be playing it.

How did you set about conveying to the audience the difference between Romeo's love for Rosaline and his love for Juliet?

Well, we never see Rosaline. Michael Boyd [the director] was always determined that Rosaline was a novice nun, and he encouraged me to think that from the off; the idea being that Rosaline was the ultimate unachievable goal, and that part of what Romeo was doing to himself was that especially (although not exclusively) adolescent thing where people fall in love with the unattainable. Whereas Juliet is certainly very real. I think the relationship with Juliet is a much more mature relationship, within the terms of the whole relationship itself being very young. Rosaline is unattainable and really more of a crush, whereas we have to believe that he falls for Juliet. He believes his life has found its meaning when he finds her. With Rosaline, he is in love with the idea of being in love; with

Juliet, he's in love with Juliet. I think that's probably the biggest difference. The love for Rosaline is a kind of melodramatic exhibition of his self-perceived complicated maturity, which by definition proves that he isn't very complicated or mature. When he meets Juliet he genuinely falls in love with another human being, rather than the concept of love itself.

To what degree does he change in the course of the play? Does he go from being one of the lads to isolated lover, or has he always stood apart from the rest?

There's certainly something of the self-dramatist in Romeo. I think that's how he likes to cast himself, even within his group of friends. He likes to see himself, and for them to see him, as the slightly complicated, Byronic tortured soul, and what I think happens is that he genuinely becomes that. Rather than it being a part he plays, it becomes his life. So I think by the end of the play he has found the purpose that he pretends to have found at the start of the play.

And does Romeo's language seem to grow to maturity in the course of the play?

It's not something I remember noticing at the time, but that's not to say that it doesn't. I try not to be too objective about things like that because then you get into a self-consciousness which is, dare I say, an old-fashioned way of approaching Shakespeare and one which I try to avoid. I think you've got to try to focus directly and solely on the text that a character is speaking in that moment if you're trying to interpret the character for a stage experience. You have to try to get within it, and not be too aware of anything going on "without" it, which might be relevant to somebody studying the text for a thesis (and I'm not saying that it's not there and those points aren't there to be made). So I don't remember noticing that in the rehearsal rooms, but I suppose what I'm saying is that maybe I was trying *not* to.

It's about the most famous fictional love affair of all time, and the window/balcony scene is one of the most celebrated ever written, so how do you get past the clichés, the historical inheritance? Did you have any special tricks for making the part and the play your own?

The fact that they come with that baggage and expectation is possibly the most difficult thing about doing those famous roles, and *Romeo and Juliet* more than most, because everybody's got an opinion on it and everyone has an expectation of what it is. Even people who have never read or seen the play think they know what *Romeo and Juliet* is. And actually I think most of the time they're wrong! What I remember particularly about *Romeo and Juliet* is that people expect a chocolate-box love story. I think that's what people imagine that story is, even though they know it's tragic and it doesn't end happily. They're expecting some great essay on love. I don't think that's what the play is. Romeo and Juliet spend remarkably little time onstage together and, when they are onstage together, the

longest chunk of time you see them interacting with each other is the balcony scene, where the very definition is that they can't touch, they can't be together, there's a physical and emotional barrier between them. I think the play is about all sorts of things, but I don't know really that it is about love. That's one of the things that you have to get over when playing Romeo, because if you come to the play thinking "I've come to play a great lover," that's not a very helpful place to start. Certainly our production was set in a quite bitter, tough environment. The play is as much about society and the politics of the world they're in as it is the meditation on love which people expect.

But to answer your question, no, I don't have any particular tricks. I'm always feeling the need to discover those tricks, but I don't know that I've quite done it yet. Having just finished doing *Hamlet*, which is another one that comes with all those expectations and preconditions, I still don't know what the answer is. You just have to try and see past it. You have to breathe a bit in the rehearsal room and try to see the scene that you're playing and the text that you're playing, rather than the weight of history—easier said than done, of course! I think another way of doing that is to try not to approach it as an English Literature exercise, which is always very tempting with Shakespeare and something that you clearly can do; there is so much to be said about every line. If I do have a "trick" or a way of approaching it, it's to just see each line for what it immediately is, in a dramatic truth and emotional context, rather than to see it in the context of what one might be looking for if you were writing a book about it.

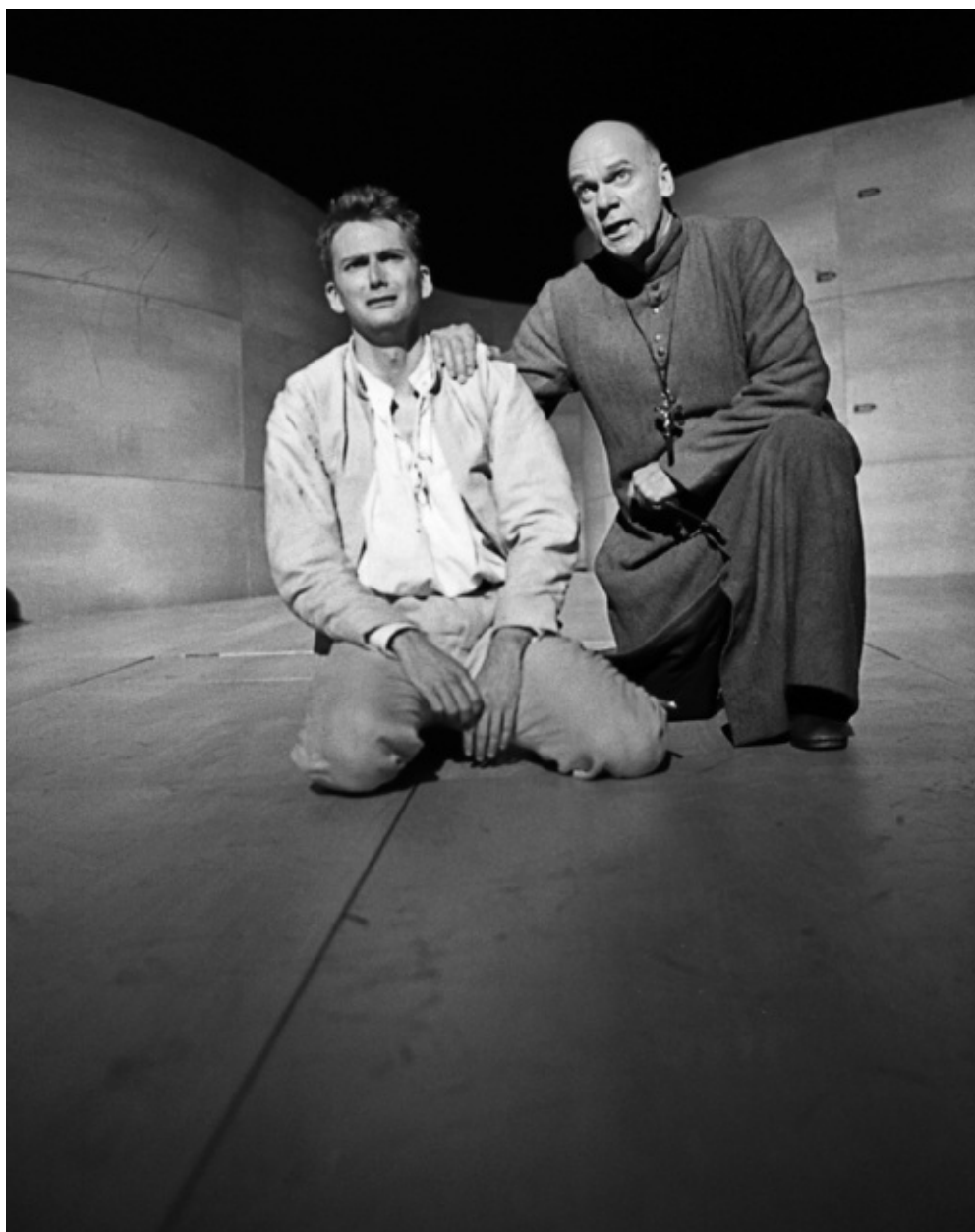
Do you see the play as a battle between the young and the old, parents and children? Or are there some important bonds between the lovers and older mentors (the Friar for Romeo, the Nurse for Juliet)?

We probably get to understand the relationship between Romeo and the Friar more clearly than we get to understand the relationship between Romeo and Juliet, just in terms of stage time. It's more immediately explicable. It's not immediately clear why Romeo and Juliet fall for each other, a bit like how, when people fall in love in real life, it's not immediately clear why they do. The relationship with the Friar is easier to unpack; it's very important to who Romeo is, more so than his parents because we don't get to know Romeo's parents at all in the play, in the way that we do with Juliet's. I suppose there is a battle. There is a generation gap in the play and a conflict between the idealism of youth, who believe that love can conquer all, as opposed to the pragmatic, cynical older characters who can see the woods from the trees and know that it's not going to be that simple. I think there is an interesting debate in the play as to whether love can conquer all or not. It was explored in our production in terms of the older characters; there were design nods toward them being from a different world—the older the character, the more traditional their dress was. I was in quite a modern leather bomber jacket, whereas at the other end of the scale you had Alfred Burke [Escalus] wearing the full Elizabethan doublet and hose, and then all the other characters in between. Michael Boyd was clearly interested in

that, and that was something we explored, yes.

In the seventeenth-century theater, there was a rumor that Shakespeare decided to kill Mercutio off halfway through the play because he was upstaging Romeo. Is the sheer brilliance of Mercutio's language a problem for Romeo?

I don't think it's a problem for Romeo. I suppose if that rumor is true, it may be a problem for the audience. I think Romeo has a genuine love for Mercutio. I think his brilliance, his energy, and mercurial wit is something that Romeo clearly cherishes. There are all sorts of questions as to quite what their relationship is, and I think there are decisions that you have to make about that in performance: about how close they are, about whether Mercutio might need Romeo more than Romeo needs Mercutio. Whether he got killed off because he was upstaging Romeo we will of course never know, but it's certainly a well-worn theatrical device: to create a character that you invest in and become fascinated by, and then kill him off for shock value.



6. David Tennant as Romeo and Des McAleer as Friar Laurence in Michael Boyd's 2000 production.

Of course it takes the play in a completely new direction. I think it's unlikely Shakespeare didn't see that coming, and just made it up because he was writing a part that was too good! I can't imagine that's the way he went about things! I imagine if he was really that entranced by that character he would have written a play called *Mercutio* and we would get to see more of him. I'm not really sure that Mercutio's language is a problem for Romeo because I don't think Mercutio is a problem for Romeo. I think Romeo is a problem for Mercutio.

The critic William Hazlitt said that “Romeo is Hamlet in love”—do you agree?

Hamlet is a more grown-up version of Romeo in that he is more aware of himself. I think Romeo has the capacity for introspection and self-knowledge, but it's a bit raw, and again with Hamlet you get someone who is beginning to understand himself and is tussling with that. Romeo believes he understands himself, but I don't think he quite does. The way he is with Rosaline is clearly a fairly immature way of interpreting what it is to be in love. Of course, he comes to understand what it is to be in love and to grow when he meets Juliet, but yet we never quite get to see Romeo grow up. It's quite possible that Hamlet could have been a bit like Romeo when he was younger. They certainly share a gift for language. I think we get to see Hamlet in love actually, because, albeit briefly, I think Hamlet is in love with Ophelia, and I don't think it's quite the same as for Romeo. So I don't think they're the same person, but I suppose there are certainly similarities and echoes between the two.

What do you think Romeo would like his epitaph to be?

I suppose what seems to be important to Romeo is that he is true to himself, as far as he knows what that “self” is. The very fact that he kills himself because he can't live without Juliet is the mark of an idealism backed up with a pure hedonism and a certainty: certainty about who he is and what is important. I think he would like to be remembered as someone who has purity of purpose. That's important to him: the fact that he doesn't give in to the pressures of what we see as the adult world, although he wouldn't see it that way. I suppose he'd like to be remembered as somebody clear-headed and true. I think he'd probably see the world around him as quite morally and emotionally bankrupt, so he would like his epitaph to be something that recognized he was the opposite of that. It's not exactly pithy, that answer, is it?! I think you were after a sound bite that I haven't quite been able to provide!

ALEXANDRA GILBREATH ON PLAYING JULIET

Alexandra Gilbreath was born in Chalfont St. Giles in 1969 and attended the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. She has established her career both in the theater and on screen. In 1996 she won the Ian Charleson Award for her performance in English Touring Theatre's production of *Hedda Gabler*. Apart from

playing Juliet in Michael Boyd's 2000 production of *Romeo and Juliet* to David Tennant's Romeo, she has played Kate in the Royal Shakespeare Company's *The Taming of the Shrew* and Maria in John Fletcher's sequel *The Tamer Tamed*, as well as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, and Mistress Ford in the musical version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Her best-known television role is as Stella Moon in the BBC series *The Monarch of the Glen*.

The text is explicit that Juliet is not quite fourteen years old. Did you play her as a thirteen-year-old, or is that inappropriate nowadays?

I was thirty-one, and so, honestly, was a bit long in the tooth to play her. But I'm of the belief that when you're young enough to play Juliet, you're not old enough to play her, and when you're old enough to play Juliet, you're too old! Of all the Shakespearean roles I've played, I found her, in terms of her personality, the toughest. Hers are not the actions of an innocent pre-teen. I found her brutally honest and very, very single-minded. She sees something and she goes out to get it, with no wavering. Mike [Michael Boyd, the director] said right at the beginning that he wanted the overall feeling of the play to lack sentimentality. He was very keen that Juliet, especially when played by someone who's a bit older (he used to call me the "geriatric Juliet"!), was not too romantic and full of whimsy. I certainly didn't find anything flowery about her.

I think some thirteen-year-olds actually appear tougher and a bit more brutal than sixteen- or seventeen-year-olds because, although they're still children, they're playing at being something else and they haven't quite recognized their limits. Also, these plays were written at a time when you were betrothed and married at thirteen, had your children and were quite likely dead by your thirties, so maybe when we talk about her innocence, that's imposing too modern a perspective. I didn't and couldn't at thirty-one go out to play a thirteen-year-old, but I could tell the story of someone who single-mindedly does something very specific and very dangerous. It sometimes manifested itself in the feeling that you were playing someone incredibly innocent who suddenly has this *overwhelming* feeling, and that desire takes over everything. "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds" (Act 3 Scene 2) is not an innocent saying. It's someone saying "Come on sun, move on! I need this man to come at night because I need to sleep with him! I want to have sex with him!" That's not an innocent thirteen-year-old! I think that when you're a little bit older you can perhaps understand that better. I think you have to be a bit more experienced and a bit more self-aware, because I think she's incredibly self-aware.

To what degree does she change in the course of the play? Is it a case of some very rapid growing up?

I don't think she's in a mature position when the play begins. She's single-minded and has a very powerful personality, but with the speed at which the play develops, yes, she does change. She grows up immediately. She experiences something in her early life that is quite overwhelming: would you love anyone

enough to actually put a knife to your own throat? That's why sometimes when it is played a bit sentimental, a bit flowery, you don't quite believe it. I don't know if I myself have such overwhelming conviction to be able to have the courage to do that. That's why I was surprised by her strength. When you play someone like Rosalind or Hermione they don't necessarily take you by surprise, but playing Juliet really did surprise me.

And does Juliet's language seem to grow to maturity in the course of the play?

It wasn't something that I noticed, because you would therefore become too self-conscious. It seemed to me that she creates language in the moment: "This is what I want and this is how I'm going to get it." I didn't feel that it was pre-planned: she's just creating, right in the middle of it. And the words that she chooses and how she expresses herself are not those of someone who matches the conventional innocent.

Both poetically and sexually, she in many ways takes the lead in the relationship, doesn't she? Was the sense of her as an active partner, as opposed to a passive love object, a big part of the excitement of playing the role?

That's why the play took me by surprise. It's like *Titanic*; we know the boat's going to sink, so why go and see the movie? It's the same with *Romeo and Juliet*. We know what's going to happen. That play in particular is very much in the public domain and everyone has got an opinion, an instinct, a feeling about it. What I love about presenting Shakespeare now, four hundred-odd years after it was written, is readdressing some issues. If people think "I like my Juliets to be sweet and innocent," you think, "What happens if they're not? How does that make you feel?" That seems to me to be the point of doing them now: not to rework them for the sake of it, but because you have an idea. Mike kept saying, "No, it's too sentimental. I don't want any sentimentality. It's much more brutal. Every single step of the way is like a car crash in your head." It's monumental what they go through, and you have to tell that story to a group of people who know what's going to happen. So you are continually reworking or readdressing exactly what, for example, "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds" *really* means to someone who is desperate for the day to pass and the night to come. And when the night comes, what's she going to do? We found that she isn't some sweet and innocent child, she is someone who is on the front foot the whole time, and I found that fascinating.

It's about the most famous fictional love affair of all time, and the window/balcony scene is one of the most celebrated ever written, so how do you get past the clichés, the historical inheritance? Did you have any special tricks for making the part and the play your own?

It is very hard to play a scene with David Tennant [who played Romeo] without finding it funny! There were these little moments that we would find that made us laugh. I think Mike relished that: that the two of us found things that not only made us laugh, but made the audience laugh too. So instead of the balcony scene being this very famous, intimidating scene, we did it in our own way and it turned out to be quite funny.

There are scenes in certain Shakespeare plays where you think “Okay, how are we going to deal with this one?” The final speech at the end of *The Taming of the Shrew* is one. To find ways of making it work and making it fresh and interesting—for you and the audience—you sometimes have to start from a point of ignorance. As a result you let your instincts take over and then you’re not necessarily thinking “I’m treading in *these* footsteps.” Then hopefully everything develops organically, because you’re responding to the other actors onstage as opposed to thinking, “Well, I know that Vivien Leigh, or whoever, played it this way.”

Sometimes you do these great plays, and they were only done two or three years ago, and you’ve got the pressure of a great production that was in the repertoire recently, and you think “Bloody hell!” So you strap the play on your back and think, “What am I going to do?” And sometimes you do find things, because it’s *you*, it’s no one else playing it. It’s you playing with the other actors and the director. Some people hated the fact that our production was unsentimental. Often the audience project their own ideas of what they want to see. What I find a much more interesting and appealing way of doing Shakespeare is to try to surprise people. Instead of making the audience feel comfortable, why don’t we make them feel uncomfortable? That’s the point of it, isn’t it? Otherwise we just do the same old thing over and over again. But if it’s something completely different, then people talk about it, and if they’re talking about it, then they’re engaging with a play that was written four hundred years ago—what a thrill is that?!

Do you see the play as a battle between the young and the old, parents and children? Or are there some important bonds between the lovers and older mentors (for Juliet, the Nurse)?

Not necessarily a battle between young and old, but there is a battle between ideas. Juliet battles with her father, but not necessarily with the Nurse. For me when playing it, it wasn’t so much about young and old, more about “This is what I want and you are the obstacle in my way.” It just so happened that Romeo and Juliet are very young and they happen to be part of two warring families.

Juliet’s apparent death is a big part of the final act. Some technical questions about playing it: first, what’s the trick of keeping so still for so long?

Keeping still for so long wasn’t necessarily a problem—you kind of get into a

little zone. Although, in *The Winter's Tale*, playing Hermione as the statue used to panic me! I'd think, "What happens if I sneeze?"! But because you're concentrating on listening to what Romeo is saying, your mind is on other things. The problem with that final scene is not making it melodramatic. It is brutal and horrific, and yet you've somehow got to try and make it believable.

And when she does awake, how do you set about immediately conveying Juliet's fear and horror on finding herself in the family tomb? And was it especially difficult to move in so few lines from awakening to seeing the dead Romeo to suicide?

I found that scene very hard, every single night, because you really want to make it believable. What you want to do is make the audience think, "She's going to wake up. It'll be fine in the end." But because they know it isn't, I found it very hard to do every time we did it. You have to put in everything, all your concentration, all your emotional self, to try and make that scene believable, because the audience know what's going to happen; they're pretty much waiting for it. What you want to do is get them on the edge of their seat, so although they know what's going to happen, they can't bear the thought that it actually will. That is the challenge of doing *Romeo and Juliet*. That's what great productions of all those classic plays do, be they Ibsen or Chekhov: they retell them in such a way that people are on the edge of their seats going, "I know what's going to happen, but ..."



7. The “balcony” scene: Alexandra Gilbreath as Juliet and David Tennant as Romeo in Michael Boyd’s 2000 production.

What do you think Juliet would like her epitaph to be?

“It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.” Because the extremity of her emotion and her feelings for this one person are such that she is prepared to stick a knife in her gut, and if you actually stop to think about that, it is overwhelming. What happens in the moments before? How do you get to that stage when you’re so overwhelmed by something you are prepared to take your own life? In that respect, I think if she had her time again, she’d say: “I wouldn’t change a thing.”

I don’t think Juliet is capable of compromise. We have to get used to that in everyday life. As you get older and you have children, you compromise. Juliet, in

her innocence, has no space for compromise. That's why I think there's nothing innocent, nothing flowery and sentimental about her.

*Harley Granville Barker was a leading member of the Elizabethan Stage Society who had played the lead in Poel's 1899 *Richard II*. He went on to become a successful director, critic, and playwright.

SHAKESPEARE'S CAREER IN THE THEATER

BEGINNINGS

William Shakespeare was an extraordinarily intelligent man who was born and died in an ordinary market town in the English Midlands. He lived an uneventful life in an eventful age. Born in April 1564, he was the eldest son of John Shakespeare, a glove-maker who was prominent on the town council until he fell into financial difficulties. Young William was educated at the local grammar in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, where he gained a thorough grounding in the Latin language, the art of rhetoric, and classical poetry. He married Ann Hathaway and had three children (Susanna, then the twins Hamnet and Judith) before his twenty-first birthday: an exceptionally young age for the period. We do not know how he supported his family in the mid-1580s.

Like many clever country boys, he moved to the city in order to make his way in the world. Like many creative people, he found a career in the entertainment business. Public playhouses and professional full-time acting companies reliant on the market for their income were born in Shakespeare's childhood. When he arrived in London as a man, sometime in the late 1580s, a new phenomenon was in the making: the actor who is so successful that he becomes a "star." The word did not exist in its modern sense, but the pattern is recognizable: audiences went to the theater not so much to see a particular show as to witness the comedian Richard Tarlton or the dramatic actor Edward Alleyn.

Shakespeare was an actor before he was a writer. It appears not to have been long before he realized that he was never going to grow into a great comedian like Tarlton or a great tragedian like Alleyn. Instead, he found a role within his company as the man who patched up old plays, breathing new life, new dramatic twists, into tired repertory pieces. He paid close attention to the work of the university-educated dramatists who were writing history plays and tragedies for the public stage in a style more ambitious, sweeping, and poetically grand than anything which had been seen before. But he may also have noted that what his friend and rival Ben Jonson would call "Marlowe's mighty line" sometimes faltered in the mode of comedy. Going to university, as Christopher Marlowe did, was all well and good for honing the arts of rhetorical elaboration and classical allusion, but it could lead to a loss of the common touch. To stay close to a large segment of the potential audience for public theater, it was necessary to write for clowns as well as kings and to intersperse the flights of poetry with the humor of the tavern, the privy, and the brothel: Shakespeare was the first to establish himself early in his career as an equal master of tragedy, comedy, and history. He

realized that theater could be the medium to make the national past available to a wider audience than the elite who could afford to read large history books: his signature early works include not only the classical tragedy *Titus Andronicus* but also the sequence of English historical plays on the Wars of the Roses.

He also invented a new role for himself, that of in-house company dramatist. Where his peers and predecessors had to sell their plays to the theater managers on a poorly paid piecework basis, Shakespeare took a percentage of the box-office income. The Lord Chamberlain's Men constituted themselves in 1594 as a joint stock company, with the profits being distributed among the core actors who had invested as sharers. Shakespeare acted himself—he appears in the cast lists of some of Ben Jonson's plays as well as the list of actors' names at the beginning of his own collected works—but his principal duty was to write two or three plays a year for the company. By holding shares, he was effectively earning himself a royalty on his work, something no author had ever done before in England. When the Lord Chamberlain's Men collected their fee for performance at court in the Christmas season of 1594, three of them went along to the Treasurer of the Chamber: not just Richard Burbage the tragedian and Will Kempe the clown, but also Shakespeare the scriptwriter. That was something new.

The next four years were the golden period in Shakespeare's career, though overshadowed by the death of his only son, Hamnet, aged eleven, in 1596. In his early thirties and in full command of both his poetic and his theatrical medium, he perfected his art of comedy, while also developing his tragic and historical writing in new ways. In 1598, Francis Meres, a Cambridge University graduate with his finger on the pulse of the London literary world, praised Shakespeare for his excellence across the genres:

As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love Labours Lost*, his *Love Labours Won*, his *Midsummer Night Dream* and his *Merchant of Venice*: for tragedy his *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo and Juliet*.

For Meres, as for the many writers who praised the “honey-flowing vein” of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, narrative poems written when the theaters were closed due to plague in 1593–94, Shakespeare was marked above all by his linguistic skill, by the gift of turning elegant poetic phrases.

PLAYHOUSES

Elizabethan playhouses were “thrust” or “one-room” theaters. To understand Shakespeare's original theatrical life, we have to forget about the indoor theater of later times, with its proscenium arch and curtain that would be opened at the beginning and closed at the end of each act. In the proscenium arch theater, stage

and auditorium are effectively two separate rooms: the audience looks from one world into another as if through the imaginary “fourth wall” framed by the proscenium. The picture-frame stage, together with the elaborate scenic effects and backdrops beyond it, created the illusion of a self-contained world—especially once nineteenth-century developments in the control of artificial lighting meant that the auditorium could be darkened and the spectators made to focus on the lighted stage. Shakespeare, by contrast, wrote for a bare platform stage with a standing audience gathered around it in a courtyard in full daylight. The audience were always conscious of themselves and their fellow spectators, and they shared the same “room” as the actors. A sense of immediate presence and the creation of rapport with the audience were all-important. The actor could not afford to imagine he was in a closed world, with silent witnesses dutifully observing him from the darkness.

Shakespeare’s theatrical career began at the Rose Theater in Southwark. The stage was wide and shallow, trapezoid in shape, like a lozenge. This design had a great deal of potential for the theatrical equivalent of cinematic split-screen effects, whereby one group of characters would enter at the door at one end of the tiring-house wall at the back of the stage and another group through the door at the other end, thus creating two rival tableaux. Many of the battle-heavy and faction-filled plays that premiered at the Rose have scenes of just this sort.

At the rear of the Rose stage, there were three capacious exits, each over ten feet wide. Unfortunately, the very limited excavation of a fragmentary portion of the original Globe site, in 1989, revealed nothing about the stage. The first Globe was built in 1599 with similar proportions to those of another theater, the Fortune, albeit that the former was polygonal and looked circular, whereas the latter was rectangular. The building contract for the Fortune survives and allows us to infer that the stage of the Globe was probably substantially wider than it was deep (perhaps forty-three feet wide and twenty-seven feet deep). It may well have been tapered at the front, like that of the Rose.

The capacity of the Globe was said to have been enormous, perhaps in excess of three thousand. It has been conjectured that about eight hundred people may have stood in the yard, with two thousand or more in the three layers of covered galleries. The other “public” playhouses were also of large capacity, whereas the indoor Blackfriars theater that Shakespeare’s company began using in 1608—the former refectory of a monastery—had overall internal dimensions of a mere forty-six by sixty feet. It would have made for a much more intimate theatrical experience and had a much smaller capacity, probably of about six hundred people. Since they paid at least sixpence a head, the Blackfriars attracted a more select or “private” audience. The atmosphere would have been closer to that of an indoor performance before the court in the Whitehall Palace or at Richmond. That Shakespeare always wrote for indoor production at court as well as outdoor performance in the public theater should make us cautious about inferring, as some scholars have, that the opportunity provided by the intimacy of the

Blackfriars led to a significant change toward a “chamber” style in his last plays—which, besides, were performed at both the Globe and the Blackfriars. After the occupation of the Blackfriars a five-act structure seems to have become more important to Shakespeare. That was because of artificial lighting: there were musical interludes between the acts, while the candles were trimmed and replaced. Again, though, something similar must have been necessary for indoor court performances throughout his career.

Front of house there were the “gatherers” who collected the money from audience members: a penny to stand in the open-air yard, another penny for a place in the covered galleries, sixpence for the prominent “lord’s rooms” to the side of the stage. In the indoor “private” theaters, gallants from the audience who fancied making themselves part of the spectacle sat on stools on the edge of the stage itself. Scholars debate as to how widespread this practice was in the public theaters such as the Globe. Once the audience were in place and the money counted, the gatherers were available to be extras onstage. That is one reason why battles and crowd scenes often come later rather than early in Shakespeare’s plays. There was no formal prohibition upon performance by women, and there certainly were women among the gatherers, so it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that female crowd members were played by females.

The play began at two o’clock in the afternoon and the theater had to be cleared by five. After the main show, there would be a jig—which consisted not only of dancing, but also of knockabout comedy (it is the origin of the farcical “afterpiece” in the eighteenth-century theater). So the time available for a Shakespeare play was about two and a half hours, somewhere between the “two hours’ traffic” mentioned in the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* and the “three hours’ spectacle” referred to in the preface to the 1647 Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher’s plays. The prologue to a play by Thomas Middleton refers to a thousand lines as “one hour’s words,” so the likelihood is that about two and a half thousand, or a maximum of three thousand lines made up the performed text. This is indeed the length of most of Shakespeare’s comedies, whereas many of his tragedies and histories are much longer, raising the possibility that he wrote full scripts, possibly with eventual publication in mind, in the full knowledge that the stage version would be heavily cut. The short Quarto texts published in his lifetime—they used to be called “Bad” Quartos—provide fascinating evidence as to the kind of cutting that probably took place. So, for instance, the First Quarto of *Hamlet* neatly merges two occasions when Hamlet is overheard, the “Fishmonger” and the “nunnery” scenes.

The social composition of the audience was mixed. The poet Sir John Davies wrote of “A thousand townsmen, gentlemen and whores, / Porters and servingmen” who would “together throng” at the public playhouses. Though moralists associated female playgoing with adultery and the sex trade, many perfectly respectable citizens’ wives were regular attendees. Some, no doubt, resembled the modern groupie: a story attested in two different sources has one

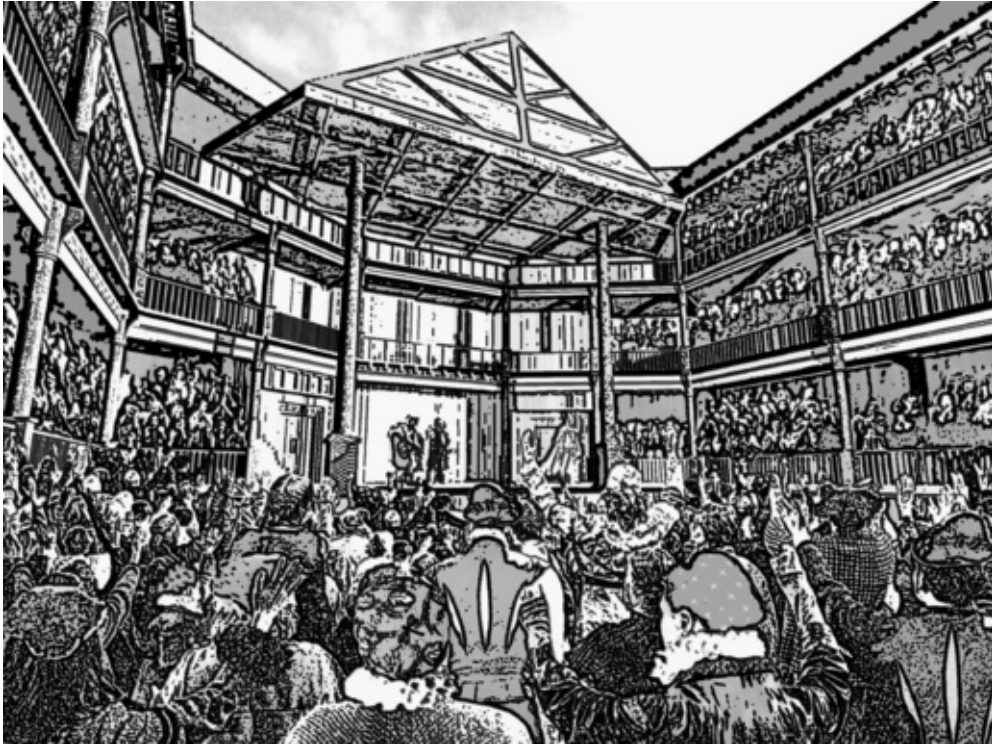
citizen's wife making a post-show assignation with Richard Burbage and ending up in bed with Shakespeare—supposedly eliciting from the latter the quip that William the Conqueror was before Richard III. Defenders of theater liked to say that by witnessing the comeuppance of villains on the stage, audience members would repent of their own wrongdoings, but the reality is that most people went to the theater then, as they do now, for entertainment more than moral edification. Besides, it would be foolish to suppose that audiences behaved in a homogeneous way: a pamphlet of the 1630s tells of how two men went to see *Pericles* and one of them laughed while the other wept. Bishop John Hall complained that people went to church for the same reasons that they went to the theater: “for company, for custom, for recreation ... to feed his eyes or his ears ... or perhaps for sleep.”

Men-about-town and clever young lawyers went to be seen as much as to see. In the modern popular imagination, shaped not least by *Shakespeare in Love* and the opening sequence of Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* film, the penny-paying groundlings stand in the yard hurling abuse or encouragement and hazelnuts or orange peel at the actors, while the sophisticates in the covered galleries appreciate Shakespeare's soaring poetry. The reality was probably the other way round. A “groundling” was a kind of fish, so the nickname suggests the penny audience standing below the level of the stage and gazing in silent open-mouthed wonder at the spectacle unfolding above them. The more difficult audience members, who kept up a running commentary of clever remarks on the performance and who occasionally got into quarrels with players, were the gallants. Like Hollywood movies in modern times, Elizabethan and Jacobean plays exercised a powerful influence on the fashion and behavior of the young. John Marston mocks the lawyers who would open their lips, perhaps to court a girl, and out would “flow / Naught but pure Juliet and Romeo.”

THE ENSEMBLE AT WORK

In the absence of typewriters and photocopying machines, reading aloud would have been the means by which the company got to know a new play. The tradition of the playwright reading his complete script to the assembled company endured for generations. A copy would then have been taken to the Master of the Revels for licensing. The theater book-holder or prompter would then have copied the parts for distribution to the actors. A partbook consisted of the character's lines, with each speech preceded by the last three or four words of the speech before, the so-called “cue.” These would have been taken away and studied or “conned.” During this period of learning the parts, an actor might have had some one-to-one instruction, perhaps from the dramatist, perhaps from a senior actor who had played the same part before, and, in the case of an apprentice, from his master. A high percentage of Desdemona's lines occur in dialogue with Othello, of Lady Macbeth's with Macbeth, Cleopatra's with Antony, and Volumnia's with Coriolanus. The roles would almost certainly have been

taken by the apprentice of the lead actor, usually Burbage, who delivers the majority of the cues. Given that apprentices lodged with their masters, there would have been ample opportunity for personal instruction, which may be what made it possible for young men to play such demanding parts.



8. Hypothetical reconstruction of the interior of an Elizabethan playhouse during a performance.

After the parts were learned, there may have been no more than a single rehearsal before the first performance. With six different plays to be put on every week, there was no time for more. Actors, then, would go into a show with a very limited sense of the whole. The notion of a collective rehearsal process that is itself a process of discovery for the actors is wholly modern and would have been incomprehensible to Shakespeare and his original ensemble. Given the number of parts an actor had to hold in his memory, the forgetting of lines was probably more frequent than in the modern theater. The book-holder was on hand to prompt.

Backstage personnel included the property man, the tire-man who oversaw the costumes, call-boys, attendants, and the musicians, who might play at various times from the main stage, the rooms above, and within the tiring-house. Scriptwriters sometimes made a nuisance of themselves backstage. There was often tension between the acting companies and the freelance playwrights from whom they purchased scripts: it was a smart move on the part of Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men to bring the writing process in-house.

Scenery was limited, though sometimes set pieces were brought on (a bank of flowers, a bed, the mouth of hell). The trapdoor from below, the gallery stage above, and the curtained discovery space at the back allowed for an array of special effects: the rising of ghosts and apparitions, the descent of gods, dialogue between a character at a window and another at ground level, the revelation of a

statue or a pair of lovers playing at chess. Ingenious use could be made of props, as with the ass's head in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In a theater that does not clutter the stage with the material paraphernalia of everyday life, those objects that are deployed may take on powerful symbolic weight, as when Shylock bears his weighing scales in one hand and a knife in the other, thus becoming a parody of the figure of Justice who traditionally bears a sword and a balance. Among the more significant items in the property cupboard of Shakespeare's company, there would have been a throne (the "chair of state"), joint stools, books, bottles, coins, purses, letters (which are brought onstage, read or referred to on about eighty occasions in the complete works), maps, gloves, a set of stocks (in which Kent is put in *King Lear*), rings, rapiers, daggers, broadswords, staves, pistols, masks and vizards, heads and skulls, torches and tapers and lanterns which served to signal night scenes on the daylight stage, a buck's head, an ass's head, animal costumes. Live animals also put in appearances, most notably the dog Crab in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and possibly a young polar bear in *The Winter's Tale*.

The costumes were the most important visual dimension of the play. Playwrights were paid between £2 and £6 per script, whereas Alleyn was not averse to paying £20 for "a black velvet cloak with sleeves embroidered all with silver and gold." No matter the period of the play, actors always wore contemporary costume. The excitement for the audience came not from any impression of historical accuracy, but from the richness of the attire and perhaps the transgressive thrill of the knowledge that here were commoners like themselves strutting in the costumes of courtiers in effective defiance of the strict sumptuary laws whereby in real life people had to wear the clothes that befitted their social station.

To an even greater degree than props, costumes could carry symbolic importance. Racial characteristics could be suggested: a breastplate and helmet for a Roman soldier, a turban for a Turk, long robes for exotic characters such as Moors, a gabardine for a Jew. The figure of Time, as in *The Winter's Tale*, would be equipped with hourglass, scythe, and wings; Rumour, who speaks the prologue of *2 Henry IV*, wore a costume adorned with a thousand tongues. The wardrobe in the tiring-house of the Globe would have contained much of the same stock as that of rival manager Philip Henslowe at the Rose: green gowns for outlaws and foresters, black for melancholy men such as Jaques and people in mourning such as the Countess in *All's Well that Ends Well* (at the beginning of *Hamlet*, the prince is still in mourning black when everyone else is in festive garb for the wedding of the new king), a gown and hood for a friar (or a feigned friar like the duke in *Measure for Measure*), blue coats and tawny to distinguish the followers of rival factions, a leather apron and ruler for a carpenter (as in the opening scene of *Julius Caesar*—and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where this is the only sign that Peter Quince is a carpenter), a cockle hat with staff and a pair of sandals for a pilgrim or palmer (the disguise assumed by Helen in *All's Well*), bodices and kirtles with farthingales beneath for the boys who are to be dressed

as girls. A gender switch such as that of Rosalind or Jessica seems to have taken between fifty and eighty lines of dialogue—Viola does not resume her “maiden weeds,” but remains in her boy’s costume to the end of *Twelfth Night* because a change would have slowed down the action at just the moment it was speeding to a climax. Henslowe’s inventory also included “a robe for to go invisible”: Oberon, Puck, and Ariel must have had something similar.

As the costumes appealed to the eyes, so there was music for the ears. Comedies included many songs. Desdemona’s willow song, perhaps a late addition to the text, is a rare and thus exceptionally poignant example from tragedy. Trumpets and tuckets sounded for ceremonial entrances, drums denoted an army on the march. Background music could create atmosphere, as at the beginning of *Twelfth Night*, during the lovers’ dialogue near the end of *The Merchant of Venice*, when the statue seemingly comes to life in *The Winter’s Tale*, and for the revival of Pericles and of Lear (in the Quarto text, but not the Folio). The haunting sound of the hautboy suggested a realm beyond the human, as when the god Hercules is imagined deserting Mark Antony. Dances symbolized the harmony of the end of a comedy—though in Shakespeare’s world of mingled joy and sorrow, someone is usually left out of the circle.

The most important resource was, of course, the actors themselves. They needed many skills: in the words of one contemporary commentator, “dancing, activity, music, song, elocution, ability of body, memory, skill of weapon, pregnancy of wit.” Their bodies were as significant as their voices. Hamlet tells the player to “suit the action to the word, the word to the action”: moments of strong emotion, known as “passions,” relied on a repertoire of dramatic gestures as well as a modulation of the voice. When Titus Andronicus has had his hand chopped off, he asks “How can I grace my talk, / Wanting a hand to give it action?” A pen portrait of “The Character of an Excellent Actor” by the dramatist John Webster is almost certainly based on his impression of Shakespeare’s leading man, Richard Burbage: “By a full and significant action of body, he charms our attention: sit in a full theatre, and you will think you see so many lines drawn from the circumference of so many ears, whiles the actor is the centre....”

Though Burbage was admired above all others, praise was also heaped upon the apprentice players whose alto voices fitted them for the parts of women. A spectator at Oxford in 1610 records how the audience were reduced to tears by the pathos of Desdemona’s death. The puritans who fumed about the biblical prohibition upon cross-dressing and the encouragement to sodomy constituted by the sight of an adult male kissing a teenage boy onstage were a small minority. Little is known, however, about the characteristics of the leading apprentices in Shakespeare’s company. It may perhaps be inferred that one was a lot taller than the other, since Shakespeare often wrote for a pair of female friends, one tall and fair, the other short and dark (Helena and Hermia, Rosalind and Celia, Beatrice and Hero).

We know little about Shakespeare's own acting roles—an early allusion indicates that he often took royal parts, and a venerable tradition gives him old Adam in *As You Like It* and the ghost of old King Hamlet. Save for Burbage's lead roles and the generic part of the clown, all such castings are mere speculation. We do not even know for sure whether the original Falstaff was Will Kempe or another actor who specialized in comic roles, Thomas Pope.

Kempe left the company in early 1599. Tradition has it that he fell out with Shakespeare over the matter of excessive improvisation. He was replaced by Robert Armin, who was less of a clown and more of a cerebral wit: this explains the difference between such parts as Lancelet Gobbo and Dogberry, which were written for Kempe, and the more verbally sophisticated Feste and Lear's Fool, which were written for Armin.

One thing that is clear from surviving "plots" or storyboards of plays from the period is that a degree of doubling was necessary. *2 Henry VI* has over sixty speaking parts, but more than half of the characters only appear in a single scene and most scenes have only six to eight speakers. At a stretch, the play could be performed by thirteen actors. When Thomas Platter saw *Julius Caesar* at the Globe in 1599, he noted that there were about fifteen. Why doesn't Paris go to the Capulet ball in *Romeo and Juliet*? Perhaps because he was doubled with Mercutio, who does. In *The Winter's Tale*, Mamillius might have come back as Perdita and Antigonus been doubled by Camillo, making the partnership with Paulina at the end a very neat touch. Titania and Oberon are often played by the same pair as Hippolyta and Theseus, suggesting a symbolic matching of the rulers of the worlds of night and day, but it is questionable whether there would have been time for the necessary costume changes. As so often, one is left in a realm of tantalizing speculation.

THE KING'S MAN

On Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, the new king, James I, who had held the Scottish throne as James VI since he had been an infant, immediately took the Lord Chamberlain's Men under his direct patronage. Henceforth they would be the King's Men, and for the rest of Shakespeare's career they were favored with far more court performances than any of their rivals. There even seem to have been rumors early in the reign that Shakespeare and Burbage were being considered for knighthoods, an unprecedented honor for mere actors—and one that in the event was not accorded to a member of the profession for nearly three hundred years, when the title was bestowed upon Henry Irving, the leading Shakespearean actor of Queen Victoria's reign.

Shakespeare's productivity rate slowed in the Jacobean years, not because of age or some personal trauma, but because there were frequent outbreaks of plague, causing the theaters to be closed for long periods. The King's Men were forced to spend many months on the road. Between November 1603 and 1608,

they were to be found at various towns in the south and Midlands, though Shakespeare probably did not tour with them by this time. He had bought a large house back home in Stratford and was accumulating other property. He may indeed have stopped acting soon after the new king took the throne. With the London theaters closed so much of the time and a large repertoire on the stocks, Shakespeare seems to have focused his energies on writing a few long and complex tragedies that could have been played on demand at court: *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and *Cymbeline* are among his longest and poetically grandest plays. *Macbeth* only survives in a shorter text, which shows signs of adaptation after Shakespeare's death. The bitterly satirical *Timon of Athens*, apparently a collaboration with Thomas Middleton that may have failed on the stage, also belongs to this period. In comedy, too, he wrote longer and morally darker works than in the Elizabethan period, pushing at the very bounds of the form in *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*.

From 1608 onward, when the King's Men began occupying the indoor Blackfriars playhouse (as a winter house, meaning that they only used the outdoor Globe in summer?), Shakespeare turned to a more romantic style. His company had a great success with a revived and altered version of an old pastoral play called *Mucedorus*. It even featured a bear. The younger dramatist John Fletcher, meanwhile, sometimes working in collaboration with Francis Beaumont, was pioneering a new style of tragicomedy, a mix of romance and royalism laced with intrigue and pastoral excursions. Shakespeare experimented with this idiom in *Cymbeline* and it was presumably with his blessing that Fletcher eventually took over as the King's Men's company dramatist. The two writers apparently collaborated on three plays in the years 1612–14: a lost romance called *Cardenio* (based on the love-madness of a character in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*), *Henry VIII* (originally staged with the title "All Is True"), and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a dramatization of Chaucer's "Knight's Tale." These were written after Shakespeare's two final solo-authored plays, *The Winter's Tale*, a self-consciously old-fashioned work dramatizing the pastoral romance of his old enemy Robert Greene, and *The Tempest*, which at one and the same time drew together multiple theatrical traditions, diverse reading, and contemporary interest in the fate of a ship that had been wrecked on the way to the New World.

The collaborations with Fletcher suggest that Shakespeare's career ended with a slow fade rather than the sudden retirement supposed by the nineteenth-century Romantic critics who read Prospero's epilogue to *The Tempest* as Shakespeare's personal farewell to his art. In the last few years of his life Shakespeare certainly spent more of his time in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he became further involved in property dealing and litigation. But his London life also continued. In 1613 he made his first major London property purchase: a freehold house in the Blackfriars district, close to his company's indoor theater. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* may have been written as late as 1614, and Shakespeare was in London on business a little over a year before he died of an unknown

cause at home in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1616, probably on his fifty-second birthday.

About half the sum of his works were published in his lifetime, in texts of variable quality. A few years after his death, his fellow actors began putting together an authorized edition of his complete *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*. It appeared in 1623, in large “Folio” format. This collection of thirty-six plays gave Shakespeare his immortality. In the words of his fellow dramatist Ben Jonson, who contributed two poems of praise at the start of the Folio, the body of his work made him “a monument without a tomb”:

And art alive still while thy book doth live

And we have wits to read and praise to give ...

He was not of an age, but for all time!

SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS: A CHRONOLOGY

1589–91

? *Arden of Faversham* (possible part authorship)

1589–92

The Taming of the Shrew

1589–92

? *Edward the Third* (possible part authorship)

1591

The Second Part of Henry the Sixth, originally called *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (element of coauthorship possible)

1591

The Third Part of Henry the Sixth, originally called *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (element of coauthorship probable)

1591–92

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

1591–92; perhaps revised 1594

The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus (probably cowritten with, or revising an earlier version by, George Peele)

1592

The First Part of Henry the Sixth, probably with Thomas

Nashe and others

1592/94

King Richard the Third

1593

Venus and Adonis (poem)

1593–94

The Rape of Lucrece (poem)

1593–1608

Sonnets (154 poems, published 1609 with *A Lover's Complaint*, a poem of disputed authorship)

1592–94/

Sir Thomas More (a single scene for a play originally

1600–03

by Anthony Munday, with other revisions by Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Heywood)

1594

The Comedy of Errors

1595

Love's Labour's Lost

1595–97

Love's Labour's Won (a lost play, unless the original title for another comedy)

1595–96

A Midsummer Night's Dream

1595–96

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

1595–96

King Richard the Second

1595–97

The Life and Death of King John (possibly earlier)

1596–97

The Merchant of Venice

1596–97

The First Part of Henry the Fourth

1597–98

The Second Part of Henry the Fourth

1598

Much Ado About Nothing

1598–99

The Passionate Pilgrim (20 poems, some not by Shakespeare)

1599

The Life of Henry the Fifth

1599

“To the Queen” (epilogue for a court performance)

1599

As You Like It

1599

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar

1600–01

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (perhaps revising an earlier version)

1600–01

The Merry Wives of Windsor (perhaps revising version of 1597–99)

1601

“Let the Bird of Loudest Lay” (poem, known since 1807 as “The Phoenix and Turtle” [turtle-dove])

1601

Twelfth Night, or What You Will

1601–02

The Tragedy of Troilus and Cressida

1604

The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice

1604

Measure for Measure

1605

All's Well That Ends Well

1605

The Life of Timon of Athens, with Thomas Middleton

1605–06

The Tragedy of King Lear

1605–08

? contribution to *The Four Plays in One* (lost, except for *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, mostly by Thomas Middleton)

1606

The Tragedy of Macbeth (surviving text has additional scenes by Thomas Middleton)

1606–07

The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra

1608

The Tragedy of Coriolanus

1608

Pericles, Prince of Tyre, with George Wilkins

1610

The Tragedy of Cymbeline

1611

The Winter's Tale

1611

The Tempest

1612–13

Cardenio, with John Fletcher (survives only in later adaptation called *Double Falsehood* by Lewis Theobald)

1613

Henry VIII (All Is True), with John Fletcher

1613–14

The Two Noble Kinsmen, with John Fletcher

FURTHER READING AND VIEWING

CRITICAL APPROACHES

Andrews, John F., ed., *Romeo and Juliet: Critical Essays* (1993). Excellent collection of essays covering language, performance, and social context.

Alie, Rosalie L., *Shakespeare's Living Art* (1974). Extremely sensitive reading, attentive to language and rhetoric.

Ayer, Northrop, *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*, ed. Robert Sandler (1986), pp. 15–33. Introductory lecture by a master critic.

Alio, Jay L., ed., *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: Texts, Contexts, and Interpretations* (1995). Interesting and varied collection of essays.

Alio, Jay L., *Romeo and Juliet: A Guide to the Play* (1998). Sound introduction.

Ahn, Coppélia, "Coming of Age in Verona," in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely (1983), pp. 171–93. Strong feminist reading.

Berberts, Sasha, *William Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* (1998). Very useful introduction offering a wide-ranging, theoretically informed account of the play.

Bryder, Susan, "Romeo and Juliet: Comedy into Tragedy," *Essays in Criticism*, 20 (1970), pp. 391–402. Exemplary close reading, with attention to genre.

Burrows, Cedric, *Harvester New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* (1991). Useful introduction to the play and discussion of various textual and interpretive problems.

Chute, R. S., ed., *New Casebooks: Romeo and Juliet* (2001). Wide-ranging, sophisticated collection of essays.

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Goldring, Peter, *Text and Performance: Romeo and Juliet* (1992). Part 2 discusses five important twentieth-century productions in detail.

Gibson, Russell, *Shakespeare at Stratford: Romeo and Juliet* (2002). Excellent, very detailed account of performances at Stratford from 1947 to 2000.

Giverson, Jill, *Shakespeare in Performance: Romeo and Juliet* (1987). Excellent introduction of play in performance up to Zeffirelli's 1968 film.

Graham, James N., ed., *Romeo and Juliet: Shakespeare in Production* (2002). Edition

of play with detailed theatrical commentary and useful stage history in introduction.

Ballwood, Robert, ed., *Players of Shakespeare 4* (1998). Includes Julian Glover on playing Friar Laurence.

Ballwood, Robert, ed., *Players of Shakespeare 5* (2003). David Tennant discusses playing Romeo.

Sourcebooks Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet: Shakespeare in Performance* (2007). Lively, useful student guide with accompanying CD.

Wright, Katherine L., *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in Performance: Traditions and Departures* (1997). Thoughtful, detailed analysis of four centuries of interpretation of performances of Romeo, Juliet, and Mercutio.

AVAILABLE ON DVD

Romeo and Juliet, directed by George Cukor (1936, DVD 2007). With Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard. Multi-Oscar-nominated, but not popular with critics or audiences. Black and white, well-spoken but definitely dated.

Romeo and Juliet, directed by Renato Castellani (1954, DVD 2000). With Laurence Harvey and Susan Shentall. Won the Grand Prix at the Venice Film Festival.

West Side Story, directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins (1961, DVD 2000). With Leonard Bernstein's brilliant music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. The play is updated to contemporary New York and competing gangs of Jets and Sharks, starring Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer. Deservedly won ten Oscars.

Romeo and Juliet, directed by Paul Czinner (1966, DVD 1999). Royal Ballet version of Prokofiev's ballet music, with Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev.

Romeo and Juliet, directed by Franco Zeffirelli (1968, DVD 1996). Cast the very young Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey. Beautiful to look at, with its recreation of medieval Verona; popular and appealing.

Romeo and Juliet, directed by Alvin Lakoff (1978, DVD 2005). Part of BBC television's Complete Shakespeare, with Patrick Ryecart and Rebecca Saire as leads in a cast which includes John Gielgud, Michael Hordern, Alan Rickman, and Celia Johnson.

William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet, directed by Baz Luhrmann (1996, DVD 2002). For the MTV generation with Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. Set in modern-day America—inventive and fast-paced, visually stunning, as if edited on acid.

Shakespeare in Love, directed by John Madden (1998, DVD 1999). With screenplay by Tom Stoppard. This dramatized Shakespeare's writing of *Romeo and Juliet*. Clever and funny, it won four Oscars, including Best Picture.

High School Musical, directed by Kenny Ortega for America's Disney Television

Channel (2006, DVD 2006). Described by its makers as a modern-day *Romeo and Juliet*: set in an American high school, immensely popular, Emmy Award-winning. There have since been two sequels.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PICTURE CREDITS

Preparation of “*Romeo and Juliet* in Performance” was assisted by a generous grant from the CAPITAL Centre (Creativity and Performance in Teaching and Learning) of the University of Warwick for research in the RSC archive at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded a term’s research leave that enabled Jonathan Bate to work on “The Director’s Cut.”

Picture research by Michelle Morton. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust for assistance with picture research (special thanks to Helen Hargest) and reproduction fees.

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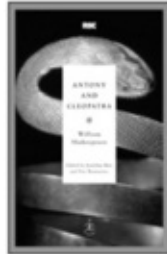
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Prologue

1 **CHORUS** this speech which did not appear in the First Folio is from the Quarto editions of the play; it is written in the form of a sonnet

1 **dignity** social status/worth

2 **Verona** city in northern Italy

3 **ancient** long-standing

3 **mutiny** discord

4 **civil** of citizens (plays on the sense of “civilized”)

5 **fatal** fateful/deadly

6 **star-crossed** thwarted by fate (the malign influence of a star or planet)

6 **take their life** derive life (with sinister play on the sense of “commit suicide”)

7 **misadventured** unfortunate

9 **fearful** frightened/fearsome

9 **passage** progress/passing (playing on the sense of “death”)

11 **but** but for

12 **traffic** business

14 **miss** be found wanting, be unsuccessful

Act 1 Scene 1

1.1 Location: a public place in Verona

1.1 **bucklers** small round shields

1 **carry coals** submit to indignity or insult

2 **colliers** those who carry coal for sale (a dirty profession and one often associated with cheating)

3 **in choler** angry (puns on “collier”)

3 **draw** i.e. our swords (puns on the sense of “carry, haul”)

4 **draw ... o’th’collar** withdraw your neck from the hangman’s noose (**collar** puns on **colliers** and **choler**)

5 **strike** attack (plays on the sense of “have sex”)

5 **moved** provoked (plays on the sense of “sexually aroused”)

8 **move ... stir** in addition to “be provoked/become sexually aroused,” both verbs also now signify “move physically, displace oneself”

8 **valiant** courageous/firm physically

- 8 **stand** stand firm/get an erection
- 11 **take the wall** take the side of the road nearest the wall (forcing anyone else to walk in the gutter that ran down the center of an Elizabethan street)
- 12 **slave** rogue
- 13 **goes ... wall** are always forced to submit (a proverbial expression)
- 15 **thrust ... wall** i.e. for sex
- 19 **men** male servants, i.e. not women
- 20 **one** the same thing
- 24 **maidenheads** virginities
- 26 **take** understand/receive sexually
- 26 **sense** meaning/physical feeling
- 27 **stand** remain upright/have an erection
- 28 **pretty ... flesh** fine fellow/man with a fine penis
- 29 **fish** i.e. the opposite of **flesh** (meat)/a woman or a vagina
- 30 **poor John** salted hake, a poor type of food/sexually inadequate, the possessor of a shriveled penis
- 30 **tool** sword/penis
- 32 **naked weapon** continues the phallic wordplay
- 33 **How** what
- 34 **Fear** doubt (possibly, Gregory then shifts the sense to an incredulous “be afraid of”)
- 35 **marry** by the Virgin Mary
- 36 **of** on
- 38 **list** please
- 39 **bite my thumb** an offensive gesture signifying threat or defiance
- 59 **swashing** a particular stroke in fencing/slashing with great force
- 62 **heartless hinds** cowardly menials, with a pun on “heartless hinds”—i.e. female deer (**hinds**) without males (harts)
- 65 **manage** use
- 69 **Clubs ... partisans** rallying cry used to summon armed apprentices
- 69 **bills and partisans** long-handled weapons with blades at the end *gown* dressing-gown
- 71 **long sword** heavy, old-fashioned sword with a long blade

- 74 **in spite of** out of spite/malice for *train* retinue
- 78 **Profaners ... steel** you who defile your swords by staining them with your fellow citizens' blood
- 80 **pernicious** destructive
- 83 **mistempered** disordered/created for wrongful purposes/wrongly tempered (i.e. made hard) with blood instead of water
- 84 **movèd** angry
- 88 **ancient** aged/venerable
- 89 **grave beseeming ornaments** dignified and seemly accessories/the trappings appropriate to dignified old age
- 91 **Cankered** corroded, rusted (with disuse)
- 91 **cankered** malignant, infected with evil
- 93 **pay ... peace** be the price for breaching the peace
- 97 **pleasure** intentions, resolution
- 100 **new abroach** newly in motion
- 101 **by** nearby, present
- 103 **ere** before
- 105 **prepared** i.e. drawn
- 108 **withal** thereby
- 110 **part and part** one side and the other
- 115 **forth** from forth
- 116 **drave** drove
- 116 **abroad** out, away from home
- 118 **westward ... side** grows on the west side of the city
- 120 **ware** aware/wary
- 121 **covert** shelter/hiding place
- 122 **affections** emotions/inclinations
- 123 **then ... found** were chiefly concerned to find a place of solitude
- 125 **humour** mood
- 126 **who** he who
- 132 **Aurora** goddess of the dawn
- 133 **heavy** sorrowful (plays on the sense of "weighty," generating a play on **light**)

—i.e. “bright/not weighty”)

133 **son** puns on **sun**

137 **Black** black/gloomy/deadly

137 **humour** includes the sense of “bodily fluid thought to affect mood,” in this case the **black** bile that caused melancholy

140 **of** it of

141 **importuned ... means** urged him to tell you by every means possible

144 **true** honest/constant/dependable

145 **close** secretive, shut up from view

146 **sounding** having his thoughts fathomed

147 **envious** malicious

147 **worm** cankerworm, the plant-destroying grub

154 **I ... stay** I hope that by remaining here you will be fortunate enough

155 **shrift** confession

156 **cousin** a general term for a relative or close friend

167 **view** appearance (Romeo’s reply shifts the sense to “sight”)

168 **proof** practice, experience

169 **muffled** Cupid, the Roman god of love, was traditionally depicted as being blind or blindfolded

169 **still** always

175 **create** created

176 **vanity** trifles, foolishness

177 **well-seeming** apparently orderly

179 **Still-waking** ever wakeful

187 **propagate** increase, multiply (perhaps with connotations of sexual reproduction, picked up in **pressed** which can refer to the pressing of one body on another during sex)

188 **love** i.e. concern for me

191 **purged** purified, rid of **smoke**

192 **vexed** tormented, afflicted

193 **discreet** discerning, prudent

194 **gall** bitterness/poison

- 195 **coz** cousin
- 196 **Soft** wait a moment
- 197 **An if** if
- 200 **sadness** seriousness (Romeo's response plays on the sense of "sorrow")
- 200 **is that** is it that
- 206 **aimed so near** i.e. guessed as much
- 207 **mark-man** marksman
- 208 **fair mark** unobstructed target/attractive vagina
- 208 **hit** plays on the sense of "copulated with"
- 210 **Cupid's arrow** playing on phallic connotations
- 210 **Dian's wit** the wisdom and ingenuity of Diana, huntress and Roman goddess of chastity (**wit** may play on a sense of "genitals")
- 211 **proof** proven impenetrability/armor
- 212 **love's** i.e. Cupid's, who was traditionally depicted as a young boy
- 212 **uncharmed** resistant to Cupid's spells/unsubdued (some editors emend to the First Quarto's "unharm'd")
- 213 **stay** endure
- 214 **bide** undergo, suffer
- 214 **encounter** assault/sexual engagement
- 215 **ope ... gold** a reference to Danae, whom Jove, Roman king of the gods, seduced in the form of a shower of gold
- 215 **lap** vagina
- 217 **That ... store** i.e. when she dies unmarried, her beauty will die for ever as she has had no children
- 217 **store** wealth/stock/potential to reproduce
- 218 **still** always
- 219 **sparing** thrift, economy
- 219 **waste** puns on "waist," generating the paradoxical image of a pregnant belly resulting from chastity
- 220 **starved** killed off
- 222 **fair** beautiful/just
- 223 **merit ... despair** deserve heaven (through her chastity) by casting me into despair (with its attendant risks of damnation)

223 **despair** spiritual hopelessness (thought to precede suicide)

224 **forsworn to** abandoned, repudiated

231 'Tis ... **more** that would only lead me to reflect on her exquisite beauty even more (to “call in question” means “to consider or examine”)

232 **happy** fortunate

232 **masks** worn by ladies to protect their fashionably pale complexions from the sun

234 **strucken** struck

236 **passing** surpassingly, exceedingly

237 **note** marginal note/sign/reminder

238 **passed** surpassed

240 **pay that doctrine** i.e. give you that lesson

Act 1 Scene 2

1.2 **Location: a public place in Verona**

1.2 **County** Count

1.2 **Clown** a rustic, comic character

1 **bound** formally required (to **keep the peace**)

4 **reckoning** estimation, reputation

6 **suit** request/courtship

7 **saying o'er** repeating

9 **change** passage

10 **pride** prime, fullest flowering (may play on the sense of “sexual desire/tumescence”)

13 **marred** damaged (puns on “married”)

13 **made** puns on “maid”

14 **Earth ... she** i.e. his other children are dead and buried

15 **hopeful** promising/expectant

15 **earth** world/body, from which she has sprung/land, which she will inherit

16 **gentle** noble

18 **An if**

19 **according** agreeing

20 **old accustomed** traditional

22 **store** plentiful company

26 **comfort** enjoyment, pleasure

26 **lusty** lively/lustful

27 **well-apparelled** finely dressed

29 **fennel** a fragrant herb with yellow flowers, sometimes associated with love

30 **Inherit** possess

32 **Which ... none** “which being the case, you may find that when you have viewed the ladies more thoroughly, my daughter, being but one among a number of them, may make up part of the group, but be found to be worthy of no real consideration”; some editors emend “one more view” to the Fourth Quarto’s “on more view”

33 **reck’ning** estimation/consideration/counting up

34 **sirrah** sir, often used to address a social inferior

37 **stay** wait

38 **it ... nets** in assigning the wrong tools to each tradesman, the Servingman, who cannot read, suggests that it is pointless for him to have been given the task of identifying those who appear on a written list; his words parody a passage from John Lyly’s *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*

39 **meddle** concern himself/interfere/have sex

39 **yard** measuring rod used by a **tailor**/penis

40 **last** wooden model of the foot, used by a **shoemaker** to mould shoes upon/penis

40 **pencil** paintbrush/penis

44 **in good time** I must do this promptly/here comes help just at the right moment

45 **another’s** i.e. another fire’s

47 **holp** helped

47 **backward turning** turning in the reverse direction

48 **another’s languish** i.e. the languishing caused by another **grief**

51 **plaintain** herb used to ease minor cuts or bruises

53 **broken** grazed

55 **bound ... madman** conventional treatments for madness included tying up the sufferer and confining him in darkness

57 **e’en** evening (used for any time after noon)

58 **gi'** give you

60 **without book** by heart

63 **rest you merry** i.e. goodbye (the Servingman understands Romeo to imply that he cannot read)

71 **whither** where

80 **crush** drink

82 **ancient** long-established

85 **unattainted** unbiased/uninfected

89 **Maintains** upholds

89 **falsehood** untruth/faithlessness/deception

90 **these** i.e. my eyes (which cannot drown however often they are flooded with tears)

91 **Transparent** clear (like **eyes**)/obvious and easily detected (like **heretics**)
heretics holders of unorthodox religious beliefs; those suspected of heresy or witchcraft were tested by being thrown into water, if they floated they were considered guilty and might be **burnt** at the stake

95 **poised** balanced, weighed

97 **Your lady's love** the love you bear your lady/the negligible amount of love your lady may bear you

99 **scant** scarcely

101 **splendour** the brilliant light

101 **mine own** i.e. the sight of my own Rosaline

Act 1 Scene 3

1.3 Location: the Capulets' house, Verona

2 **by ... old** the Nurse cannot swear to having been a virgin at thirteen

3 **What** an expression of impatience

4 **God forbid** either an apologetic exclamation for the fact that **ladybird**, as well as being a term of endearment, could also mean "lewd woman," or an expression of concern for Juliet's well-being

8 **give leave** give us leave (i.e. leave us alone)

10 **thou's** thou shalt

11 **pretty fair/proper**

14 **teen** sorrow (punning on the suffix of **fourteen**)

16 **Lammas-tide** 1 August, the harvest festival

18 **Even or odd** the Nurse has misunderstood Lady Capulet's sense of **odd** (i.e. a few)

18 **Even ... stinted and said "Ay"** all the early texts print this speech as prose, though it has some verse rhythms within it, which have led many editors to set it as verse; the same goes for the Nurse's remaining speeches in the scene

18 **Lammas ... night** the evening of 31 July

19 **Susan** the Nurse's dead daughter

25 **laid ... dug** applied the bitter-tasting plant wormwood to my breast (as a means of weaning the baby)

27 **Mantua** city in northern Italy

28 **bear a brain** i.e. have a good memory

30 **fool** a term of endearment

30 **"Shake" ... dovehouse** i.e. the dovehouse shook as a result of the earthquake/the shaking of the dovehouse instructed the Nurse to stir herself

30 **quoth** said

31 **trow** am sure

31 **trudge** depart, walk off

33 **th'rood** Christ's cross

34 **broke** banged, grazed

35 **a was** he was

37 **fall backward** i.e. for sex

37 **wit** understanding

38 **holidam** holiness/what I consider holy

39 **come about** come true

40 **warrant** assure you

42 **stinted** stopped (crying)

46 **it** its

46 **stone** testicle

51 **say I** puns on **said "Ay"**

52 **mark ... grace** single you out for mercy

54 **once** one day

57 **disposition** inclination

- 60 **thy teat** the breast that fed you
- 64 **much ... years** at much the same age
- 68 **man of wax** i.e. perfect, as if modeled from wax
- 75 **several** individual, separate (an apparently purposeful Folio emendation of Quarto's "married lineament")
- 75 **lineament** facial feature (playing on the sense of "line or sketch")
- 76 **content** happiness, satisfaction (plays on the sense of "contents of a **volume**")
- 78 **margent** margin (which might contain additional commentary)
- 79 **unbound** unmarried/without a book's binding
- 80 **cover** plays on the notion of "embracing wife" and puns on the phrase "feme covert" (a wife)
- 81 **The ... hide** the fish is in his element within the confines of the sea, and it is an excellent thing for a beautiful exterior to cover and compliment the beauty that lies within
- 83 **book** binding
- 84 **clasps** fastenings on a book/embraces
- 87 **women ... men** i.e. in pregnancy
- 88 **like of** be pleased by
- 89 **look** expect/use my eyes
- 89 **liking move** may generate liking
- 90 **endart mine eye** gaze piercingly as if firing one of Cupid's arrows
- 95 **straight** straight away
- 96 **county** count (i.e. Paris)
- 96 **stays** awaits

Act 1 Scene 4

1.4 Location: near the Capulets' house; the action then shifts indoors

1.4 Masquers masked performers

1 speech ... excuse traditionally one of the masquers would make a speech excusing the group's intrusion and complimenting the company

3 The ... prolixity such long-windedness is out of fashion

4 Cupid i.e. boy dressed as Cupid who would deliver the speech for the masquers

4 hoodwinked blindfolded

5 Tartar's ... lath imitation bow made out of a narrow strip of wood and painted

to look like the powerful lip-shaped bow of a Tartar (person from central Asia)

6 **crow-keeper** scarecrow

7 **measure** judge

8 **measure ... measure** mete out a dance to them/pace out a dance

9 **ambling** affected way of walking or dancing

10 **heavy** melancholy (plays on the sense of “weighty,” enabling Romeo to pun on **light**)

16 **common bound** ordinary limit (**bound** puns on the senses of “leap in a dance” and “state of being shackled”)

17 **enpiercèd** pierced through

17 **shaft** arrow

18 **bound** fastened down/imprisoned

19 **pitch** degree/height (literally, highest point of a falcon’s flight)

19 **dull** heavy/dim/gloomy

21 **And ... love** plays on the senses of “and if you penetrated your lover sexually you would weigh her down with your body/and if you lost your erection during sex you would disappoint your lover”

22 **oppression** misfortune/physical pressure

22 **thing** plays on sense of “vagina” (Romeo then shifts the punning sense to “penis”)

24 **rude** harsh/turbulent/vulgar/large and coarse

24 **boist’rous** painful to the feelings/turbulent/stiff (with sexual connotations)

24 **pricks** plays on sense of “penetrates, thrusts like a penis”

26 **prick** wound, stab/penetrate sexually/stimulate sexually (i.e. masturbate)

26 **for** in return for

26 **beat love down** get the better of love/get rid of your erection

27 **case** mask

28 **visor ... visor** mask for a face/mask for a face so ugly it resembles a grotesque mask

29 **quote** take note of

30 **beetle brows** bushy or overhanging eyebrows (on the mask)

32 **betake ... legs** i.e. dance

33 **wantons** lively/promiscuous people

- 33 **light of heart** carefree/promiscuous
- 34 **Tickle** plays on sense of “stimulate sexually”
- 34 **senseless** lacking feeling
- 34 **rushes** commonly used to cover floors
- 34 **heels** often associated with sexual licence
- 35 **proverbed ... phrase** furnished with an old proverb
- 36 **I'll ... on** may refer to the proverb “a good candle-holder proves a good gamester” (i.e. one is better off as a spectator)
- 37 **The ... done** refers to the proverb “when play is at the best, it is time to leave”
- 38 **dun** gray-brown; puns on **done**
- 38 **dun's ... word** a reference to the quiet and hidden nature of a dun mouse, hence “be still,” the sort of cautionary phrase a **constable** might utter
- 39 **draw ... mire** refers to the game “Dun is in the mire” in which players heave a horse called Dun, represented by a heavy log, out of imaginary mud
- 40 **save your reverence** if you'll excuse my language
- 41 **burn daylight** waste time (Romeo interprets this literally and disagrees on the grounds that it is nighttime)
- 45 **Take ... wits** understand my true meaning, for good sense is five times more likely to be found there (through the use of reason) than in the exercise of the senses
- 47 **mean** intend (playing on Mercutio's sense of “signify”)
- 48 **wit** wisdom
- 50 **tonight** last night
- 55 **Queen Mab** possibly from the Celtic fairy queen “Mabh,” but **queen** puns on “quean” (i.e. prostitute) and **mab** could also mean “promiscuous woman”
- 57 **agate-stone** precious stone often set in a ring and carved with tiny figures
- 58 **alderman** influential member of a local council
- 59 **atomies** creatures as tiny as atoms
- 61 **spinnners** spiders
- 63 **traces** straps linking the
- 63 **collar** round an animal's neck to the crossbar of the **chariot**
- 65 **lash** flexible cord of the whip

- 65 **film** fine gossamer-like thread
- 66 **wagoner** driver
- 67 **worm ... maid** worms were said to breed in the fingers of lazy maids
- 70 **joiner** skilled craftsman who works in wood
- 70 **grub** insect larva or worm that bores holes
- 74 **curtsies** bows
- 74 **straight** straight away
- 78 **sweetmeats** candied fruit/confectionary
- 80 **smelling ... suit** finding someone with a petition to present at court from whom he may claim a fee for his assistance
- 81 **tithe-pig** pig given to the **parson** as part of the tithe (the tenth of one's goods due to the Church annually)
- 83 **another benefice** additional Church position (with property and income)
- 86 **breaches** gaps in fortifications inflicted by artillery
- 86 **ambuscadoes** ambushes
- 86 **Spanish blades** Spanish swords, especially those made in Toledo, were famed for being of superior quality
- 87 **healths five-fathom deep** toasts drunk from extremely deep glasses
- 87 **anon** shortly
- 92 **bakes** stiffens/forms into a mass
- 92 **elflocks** tangles (which superstition held to be the work of elves)
- 94 **hag** evil spirit in female form (here the incubus that **presses** on sleepers and causes nightmares or erotic dreams)
- 95 **learns** teaches
- 95 **bear** bear the weight of a man/bear children
- 96 **carriage** deportment/ability to carry a burden (i.e. a man or a baby)
- 99 **nothing** plays on the sense of "vagina"
- 102 **Begot** conceived, created
- 102 **vain** worthless, empty, idle
- 107 **Turning his side** changing direction/changing allegiance
- 110 **misgives** fears/is full of foreboding about
- 112 **fearful** fear-inspiring

- 112 **date** appointed time
- 113 **expire** cause to expire
- 113 **term** duration/agreed period for repayment (Romeo has mortgaged his life)
- 115 **forfeit** penalty/loss
- 118 **drum** drummer
- 119 **take away** i.e. clear the table
- 120 **trencher** wooden plate
- 121 **manners** may quibble on the Latin *manuarius* to suggest “belonging to the hand”
- 122 **foul** bad/dirty
- 123 **joint-stools** stools made of parts fitted together by a joiner
- 124 **court-cupboard** sideboard
- 124 **plate** silver or gold tableware
- 125 **marchpane** marzipan
- 126 **Grindstone** like **Potpan**, a name that suggests the character has a domestic function, though Grindstone, used to sharpen knives, may additionally be sexually suggestive (“to grind” had a slang sense of “to have sex,” a “stone” could also mean a “testicle”)
- 130 **Cheerly** cheerily
- 131 **the ... all** a proverb equivalent to “the winner takes all”
- 133 **walk a bout** dance a round
- 135 **deny** refuse
- 135 **makes dainty** is coyly reluctant
- 136 **Am ... now?** Have I touched a sensitive spot/hit home with this?
- 142 **A hall** i.e. clear the hall
- 143 **turn ... up** clear the tables to one side, probably by removing the boards from trestle tables
- 145 **sirrah** sir (used to a social inferior, here either a servant, younger male guest, Capulet himself or, affectionately, the **cousin**) **unlooked-for** unexpected
- 150 **By'r lady** by Our Lady (the Virgin Mary)
- 153 **Pentecost** Whit Sunday (the seventh Sunday after Easter)
- 158 **ward** minor under the control of a guardian (i.e. under twenty-one)
- 164 **Ethiope's** Ethiopian's

165 **Beauty** possibly puns on “booty”

165 **use** plays on sense of “financial interest”

165 **earth** life on earth/death and burial

165 **dear** beloved/costly

168 **her ... stand** where she stands

169 **rude** rough/uncivilized

170 **Forswear it** deny it/renounce my former vows of love (to Rosaline)

173 **rapier** lightweight sword

174 **antic** grotesque (refers to Romeo’s mask)

175 **fleer** mock, laugh scornfully

175 **solemnity** celebration

176 **stock** ancestry

185 **portly** of good bearing/dignified

193 **semblance** appearance

197 **goodman** a man below the rank of gentleman

197 **goodman boy** a contemptuous and belittling expression

197 **go to** an expression of impatience and reproof

199 **God ... soul** an oath

201 **set cock-a-hoop** behave recklessly/provoke disorder

201 **be the man** play the big man

204 **saucy** insolent

205 **scathe** injure

205 **I know what** I assure you/I know how much

206 **contrary** contradict, defy

206 **time** i.e. time you complied/time you were taught a lesson/time I concerned myself with my guests

207 **said** done

207 **hearts** fine friends (i.e. the guests)

207 **princox** conceited, impertinent youth

210 **perforce** enforced

210 **choler** anger

- 211 **different** antagonistic, clashing
- 214 **profane** desecrate, defile
- 215 **shrine** i.e. Juliet's hand
- 219 **mannerly ... this** shows proper devotion in this action
- 220 **saints** i.e. images of saints
- 221 **palmer**s pilgrims who have traveled to the Holy Land and returned with a palm leaf as a symbol of their visit (playing on **palm** of the hand)
- 225 **grant thou** you must concede/grant their prayers
- 226 **move** entreat, pray (Romeo shifts the sense to "change position")
- 230 **urged** argued/provoked
- 232 **by th'book** expertly, by the rules/religiously, in accordance with the Bible
- 234 **What** who
- 235 **bachelor** young man
- 238 **withal** with
- 239 **lay hold of** with sexual connotations
- 240 **the chinks** lots of money (plays on sense of "vagina")
- 242 **dear account** costly debt, heavy reckoning (**dear** puns on sense of "beloved")
- 242 **my foe's debt** a debt I owe to my foe
- 243 **the ... best** another allusion to the proverb "when play is at the best, it is time to leave"
- 246 **banquet** light meal/course of sweetmeats, fruit and wine
- 246 **towards** ready, imminent
- 248 **honest** honorable
- 250 **fay** faith
- 252 **yond** yonder, that
- 259 **like** likely
- 264 **prodigious** abnormal (used to describe a deformed baby)/ill-omened
- 269 **Anon** coming, just a minute

Act 2

2 **gapes** waits eagerly

3 **fair** beauty (i.e. Rosaline)

3 **groaned ... die** perhaps with sexual connotations (“to die” can mean “to orgasm”)

4 **matched** compared

5 **again** in return

6 **Alike** both equally

6 **looks** physical appearance/gazes

7 **foe supposed** i.e. Juliet

7 **complain** make a lover’s laments

8 **fearful** frightening

10 **use** are accustomed

14 **Temp’ring extremities** modifying severe hardships

Act 2 Scene 1

2.1 Location: *outside the Capulets’ walled orchard; the action then shifts to the orchard itself*

1 **go forward** move on, leave

2 **earth** i.e. his body

2 **centre** i.e. **heart**/Juliet

6 **orchard** garden/land devoted to herbs and fruit trees

8 **conjure** summon him with an incantation as one would a spirit

9 **Humours!** (creature of) moods

11 **rhyme** i.e. verse of love poetry

13 **gossip** old friend

13 **Venus** Roman goddess of love

14 **purblind** blind

15 **Abraham Cupid** i.e. one who is both young and old, and a patriarch like the biblical Abraham

16 **King ... beggar-maid** the tale of the African King Cophetua, who fell in love with a beggar, was popularized in a ballad

18 **The ... dead** probably refers to performing apes who played dead as part of an act (**ape** is also an affectionate term)

22 **demesnes** lands (i.e. the vaginal area)

26 **raise a spirit** summon a supernatural spirit/get an erect penis

26 **circle** magic circle/vagina

- 27 **strange** supernatural/belonging to someone other than Romeo
- 27 **stand** continues to play on the idea of having an erection
- 28 **laid ... down** subdued the spirit/provided sex and caused the erection to subside
- 29 **spite** vexation
- 30 **honest** honorable (plays on the sense of “chaste”)
- 33 **consorted with** associated with/part of (plays on the sense of “sexually intimate with”)
- 33 **humorous** damp/subject to varying moods
- 35 **hit the mark** strike the target/penetrate the vagina
- 36 **medlar** fruit with a deep hollow at the top, hence a slang term for the vagina (also puns on “meddler”—i.e. “fornicator”)
- 39 **O** another vaginal pun
- 40 **open arse** medlar fruit, with obvious sexual sense
- 40 **pop’rin pear** pear from Poperinghe in Flanders and a slang term for the penis; puns on “pop her in” (where “her” signifies “it”)
- 41 **truckle-bed** small wheeled bed stored under a larger bed
- 42 **field-bed** bed on the ground *above* i.e. on the upper staging level or gallery; the entry, or the sight of Juliet, might be delayed until “It is my lady”
- 51 **maid** votary (of Diana, Roman goddess of the moon and chastity)
- 53 **vestal livery** virginal clothing
- 62 **spheres** orbits; stars and planets were thought to be contained within transparent concentric spheres that rotated around the earth
- 74 **glorious** magnificent/illustrious/shining
- 76 **white upturnèd** looking upward, so that the whites of the eyes are visible
- 80 **wherefore** why
- 86 **though** even if you were
- 93 **owes** owns
- 94 **doff** cast off
- 95 **for** in exchange for
- 100 **bescreened** concealed
- 101 **counsel** private thoughts
- 115 **o’er-perch** fly over

122 **proof** impervious/armored
125 **but** unless
127 **proroguèd** postponed
127 **wanting of** lacking
130 **counsel** advice, guidance
131 **pilot** navigator, one who directs the course of a ship
137 **Fain** willingly
137 **form** formality, decorum
138 **compliment** etiquette
142 **Jove** Jupiter, Roman king of the gods
143 **pronounce** declare
146 **So** so long as
146 **else** otherwise
147 **fond** loving/infatuated/foolish
148 **light** frivolous/forward/unchaste
150 **coying** coyness, affected reluctance
150 **strange** aloof, reserved
152 **ware** aware (of you)
155 **Which** which **yielding**
155 **discoverèd** revealed
159 **circlèd orb** i.e. celestial sphere
163 **gracious** full of divine grace
168 **contract** i.e. mutual declarations of love
177 **satisfaction** may pick up on the sense of “sexual satisfaction”
180 **were** were mine
182 **frank** generous/candid
184 **bounty** generosity
194 **bent** intention, inclination
203 **strife** antagonism/strivings, efforts
207 **want** lack
210 **Hist** a whispered call for attention

211 **tassel-gentle** tercel gentle, a male falcon

212 **Bondage is hoarse** i.e. one who is confined can only whisper

213 **Echo** in Greek mythology, Echo, rejected by Narcissus, pined away in caves until only her voice was left

220 **nyas** young hawk (which has yet to fly)

226 **to** in order to

226 **still** yet/always (Romeo plays with these meanings and with the sense of “motionless”)

231 **wanton’s** spoiled child’s

233 **gyves** fetters

245 **fleckled** dappled

246 **From forth** away from, out of

246 **Titan** Roman sun god, who drove the sun across the heavens in a chariot

247 **ghostly** holy, spiritual

247 **close cell** humble dwelling, especially that of a monk

248 **dear hap** good fortune (though **dear** may quibble ominously on “dire, grievous”)

Act 2 Scene 2

2.2 Location: near Friar Laurence’s cell, Verona

5 **advance** raise

7 **osier cage** willow basket

8 **baleful** deadly

11 **divers** various

14 **None ... some** there are none that do not have some useful properties

15 **mickle** great **grace** beneficent virtue

19 **ought** anything

19 **strained** forced

25 **that part** i.e. its smell

26 **slays** some editors prefer the Second Quarto’s “stays”

26 **with** along with

27 **them still** themselves always

30 **canker** worm that destroys plants

- 32 **Benedicite!** Bless you!
- 34 **argues** suggests
- 34 **distempered** disordered, unhappy
- 36 **Care** worry
- 39 **couch** lay, rest
- 53 **physic** medicine, healing
- 54 **lo** look (a common speech marker)
- 55 **intercession** petition, entreaty
- 55 **steads** helps
- 56 **rest homely** remain simple
- 56 **drift** meaning/aim
- 57 **shrift** absolution
- 75 **old** former/abundant
- 80 **sentence** maxim, saying
- 82 **chid'st** rebuked
- 84 **bad'st** bade, instructed
- 88 **grace** favor
- 91 **read by rote** recite by memory, without understanding
- 93 **In one respect** for one reason
- 96 **stand** insist/depend

Act 2 Scene 3

2.3 *Location: a public place in Verona*

- 2 **tonight** last night
- 3 **man** servant
- 9 **answer it** accept the challenge (in the following line Mercutio plays on the literal meaning)
- 12 **dared** challenged
- 14 **eye** plays on sense of “vagina”
- 15 **pin** wooden peg at the center of a target (plays on sense of “penis”)
- 15 **blind bow-boy's** i.e. Cupid's
- 16 **butt-shaft** strong unbarbed arrow (in archery used for shooting at the butt, a mound on which the target stood)

- 18 **prince of cats** an allusion to Tybert, the cat in the moral tale *Reynard the Fox*
- 19 **captain of compliments** master of the fastidious etiquette of duelling
- 19 **prick-song** written music
- 20 **rests ... rests** pauses very briefly (between feinting thrusts), like a musician pausing momentarily between very short notes
- 21 **third** i.e. third thrust (the genuine one)
- 21 **butcher ... button** i.e. so precise he can pierce his opponent's button
- 23 **first house** best fencing school
- 23 **first ... cause** in the rules of fencing, the two valid reasons for undertaking a duel
- 24 *passado* forward thrust with one foot advanced *punto reverso* backhanded thrust *hay* penetrating thrust
- 26 **The pox of a plague** upon
- 26 **affecting** affected, pretentious
- 26 **phantasimes** fanciful, extravagant men
- 27 **these ... accent** those whose speech is peppered with fashionable foreign phrases/those who pronounce words in an affected manner or with a foreign inflection
- 27 **blade** sword/fine fellow
- 28 **tall** brave/fine
- 29 **grandsire** Mercutio addresses an imaginary old man or grandfather
- 30 **strange flies** bizarre or foreign parasites
- 31 **stand** insist (plays on the literal sense)
- 31 **form** code of behavior, etiquette (plays on sense of **bench**)
- 32 **old bench** i.e. traditional behavior and customs
- 32 **their bones** i.e. their bones are so tender they cannot sit on a hard bench/their bones are corrupted from venereal disease (plays on the way such men fill their speech with foreign words, here the French bon, i.e. "good")
- 34 **roe** female deer/semen i.e. he is sexually exhausted (plays on the first syllable of Romeo's name, leaving "me, o," the lament of a lover)
- 34 **dried herring** withered penis (**roe** was removed from the herring during the curing process)
- 34 **flesh** plays on sense of "penis/erection"
- 35 **fishified** made fish-like, i.e. coldblooded/dried out (impotent)/obsessed with

your mistress' vagina

35 **numbers ... in** the Italian poet **Petrarch** wrote passionate verse (**numbers**) to his love **Laura**

36 **flowed in** wrote fluently/overflowed in/swam in **to** compared to

37 **better love** i.e. Petrarch

37 **Dido** the legendary Queen of Carthage who committed suicide after her lover Aeneas deserted her

37 **dowdy** shabbily dressed woman

38 **Cleopatra** Egyptian queen of the first century BC who committed suicide after the loss of her kingdom and the death of her lover Antony

38 **Helen and Hero** the famously beautiful Helen of Troy, and Hero, lover of Leander, who committed suicide when he drowned swimming the Hellespont to see her

38 **hildings** good-for-nothings/whores

39 **Thisbe** the lover of Pyramus committed suicide after his death

39 **grey** considered a particularly beautiful eye color

39 **not** nothing

40 **bon jour** "good day" (French)

40 **to ... slop** to match your French-style loose breeches

41 **the counterfeit** i.e. the slip (a counterfeit coin was known as a **slip**)

44 **conceive** understand, work it out

46 **case** situation (Mercutio then shifts the sense to "vagina")

48 **bow ... hams** bow from the waist (playing on **courtesy**, a form of **curtsy**)/hunch over after a heavy bout of sexual activity or with the pain of venereal disease

48 **hams** thighs and buttocks

49 **curtsy** bow

50 **kindly hit it** readily got it/naturally had sex

52 **very pink** most excellent example (Romeo plays on the fact that a pink is a type of **flower** and on the verb "to pink" (i.e. to ornament a **pump** or garment by punching small holes or designs into it))

55 **pump** light shoe

55 **flowered** decorated with flowers/pinked

56 **Sure** sure-footed, secure

56 **follow me** follow (**me** is emphatic)

57 **single** only/thin

58 **sole singular** uniquely individual/alone

59 **single-soled ... singleness** slight, poor jest, only noteworthy for the fact that there is only one of it/that it is simple

61 **Switch** whip

61 **Switch and spurs** i.e. urge your wits on

61 **cry a match** declare the contest is over/declare my victory

63 **wild-goose chase** horse race in which the leading rider chose the course and the others were obliged to follow him anywhere/a pointless pursuit

64 **of the wild-goose** i.e. foolishness (geese were proverbially stupid)

65 **Was ... goose?** Have I evened the score with my jest about the goose?

68 **for the goose** as a stupid person/in search of a prostitute

71 **sweeting** sweet apple

71 **sharp sauce** biting riposte/stinging impudence/bitter sauce for food

73 **And ... goose?** Romeo may allude to the proverb “sweet meat must have sour sauce”; he may also shift the sense of **sauce** to “semen,” so that **served** plays on the sense of sexual service, and **goose** continues to play on the sense of “prostitute”

74 **wit** plays on sense of “penis”

74 **cheverel** easily stretched kid leather

75 **ell** forty-five inches/penis

77 **broad** large/obvious/outspoken/indecent (may pun on “brood-goose” and on “abroad,” i.e. out and about)

80 **drivelling** tedious/dribbling

81 **natural** idiot, fool

81 **lolling** with tongue (or **bauble**) hanging out

82 **bauble** baton with a carved head on one end traditionally carried by a fool/penis (fools were supposed to be particularly well-endowed)

82 **hole** plays on the sense of “vagina”

83 **there** i.e. now, at this point in your jesting (but Mercutio plays on the sense of “in the **hole**”)

84 **stop in** cease telling/stuff in

84 **tale** puns on “tail,” i.e. penis

84 **against the hair** against my wish/up against the pubic hair

85 **large** long/vulgar/erect

86 **short** plays on the sense of “flaccid, no longer erect”

87 **was ... depth** had reached the conclusion/had achieved orgasm (**whole** puns on **hole**)

88 **occupy** continue/have sex with

88 **argument** topic (almost certainly plays on a sense of “vagina”)

89 **goodly gear** applies either to the joke (“good stuff” quibbling on the sense of “fine genitals”) or to the nurse (“fine clothing/good new matter for a joke”)

89 **A sail** the cry given when a ship is sighted (here a reference to the Nurse’s appearance or manner of approach)

90 **shirt ... smock** i.e. man and a woman

99 **hand** of the clock (plays on the sense of “human hand”)

100 **prick** mark on the clock face indicating the hour/penis

101 **Out upon you!** expression of indignant reproach

101 **What** what kind of

102 **that ... mar** i.e. though made in God’s image, such a man will ruin it through sin

104 **troth** faith

105 **quoth a** said he

109 **fault** lack

111 **took** taken, interpreted

113 **confidence** malapropism for “conference”/private conversation

114 **indite** intentional malapropism for “invite”

114 **supper** also euphemistic for sex

115 **bawd** hare/procurer, pimp

115 **So ho!** a hunting cry given when game is sighted

117 **hare** plays on the sense of “prostitute”

117 **Lenten pie** pie consumed during Lent when meat eating was prohibited (in theory such a pie should be meatless so this hare pie may be a leftover or one made of old meat that has been obtained illicitly; **pie** was also a slang term for the vagina)

- 118 **stale** plays on the sense of “prostitute”
- 118 **hoar** mouldy, old (puns on “whore”)
- 118 **be spent** used up, eaten/employed sexually
- 121 **meat** plays on sense of “sexual goods/vagina”
- 122 **hoar** the word now takes on sense of “syphilitic”
- 123 **too ... score** not worth paying for/not worth having sex with
- 124 **hoars** becomes mouldy/is diseased/infected with venereal disease
- 130 **merchant** fellow
- 131 **ropery** roguery/trickery/lewdness
- 133 **stand to** uphold, abide by (plays on the idea of sustaining an erection)
- 135 **An a** if he
- 135 **take him down** humble him, take him down a peg or two (plays on sense of “quell his erection”)
- 136 **lustier** livelier/more lustful
- 136 **Jacks** knaves (and possibly “penises”)
- 138 **flirt-gills** loose women, whores
- 138 **skains-mates** a “skene” is a dagger, hence “knife-wielding companions/whores” (literally, the sheath for his phallic dagger)
- 139 **use ... pleasure** treat me as he wishes (Peter plays on the sense of “have sex with me”)
- 142 **weapon** sword/penis
- 145 **part** with vaginal connotations
- 151 **deal double with** deceive/betray sexually (“to deal” was to have sex)
- 153 **weak** poor, contemptible
- 155 **protest** declare/vow
- 158 **mark** listen to
- 163 **shrift** confession
- 165 **shrived** absolved
- 171 **CORDS ... stair** a rope ladder
- 172 **top-gallant** highest point (literally the platform at the top of the tallest mast on a ship)
- 174 **quit** requite, reward

178 **secret** trustworthy

179 “**Two ... away**” proverbial saying meaning that two may keep a secret in the absence of a third party

180 **Warrant thee** be assured

182 **prating** chattering, babbling

183 **fain ... aboard** willingly lay a claim to her (from the practice of bringing one’s own knife to the dinner table, or “board,” and using it to mark one’s place); to “lay aboard” could also refer to boarding a vessel, and plays on the sense of sexual boarding (**knife** has phallic connotations)

184 **as lief** rather, as soon

186 **properer** finer/better-looking

187 **clout** piece of cloth/sail

187 **versal** whole (from “universal”)

188 **rosemary** the herb symbolized fidelity and remembrance, and was used at weddings and funerals

190 **dog’s name** because “r” sounds like a dog’s growl

190 **R is for the** — the Nurse may be about to say “arse”

192 **sententious** malapropism for “sentences,” i.e. maxims

197 **apace** quickly

Act 2 Scene 4

2.4 Location: either the Capulets’ house or their garden

4 **lame** slow/unsatisfactory

4 **herald** messenger

6 **louring** frowning, darkened

7 **nimble-pinioned ... love** Venus, the Roman goddess of love, had a chariot drawn by swift-winged doves

14 **bandy** toss (to and fro, like a **ball** in tennis)

26 **jaunt** tiring, troublesome journey

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

38 **simple** foolish

50 **Beshrew** curse

54 **honest** honorable

61 **God’s lady** the Virgin Mary

- 62 **hot** eager/fervent/impatient (with a play on the sense of “lustful”)
62 **come up** expression of indignant surprise and reproof
63 **poultice** hot preparation applied to the skin to soothe aches
65 **coil** fuss
68 **hie** hurry
70 **wanton** unrestrained/lively/sexually passionate
74 **bird’s nest** i.e. Juliet’s room (**bird** plays on the sense of “young woman” and **nest** on the sense of “vagina”)
76 **bear the burden** do the work/bear the weight of Romeo’s body

Act 2 Scene 5

2.5 *Location: Friar Laurence’s cell*

- 4 **countervail** counterbalance
6 **close** join
10 **powder** gunpowder
11 **consume** are destroyed (with a play on sexual consummation)
13 **confounds** ruins
17 **flint** i.e. stone floor
18 **gossamers** fine cobwebs
19 **wanton** playful
20 **light** not heavy/worthless
20 **vanity** transitory worldly joy
22 **thank thee** i.e. with a kiss
23 **As ... much** i.e. I must kiss him in return or I shall have been overpaid
25 **that if**
26 **blazon** describe/proclaim
27 **music’s tongue** i.e. Juliet’s voice and words
28 **imagined** i.e. not yet expressed
29 **in either** from one another
30 **Conceit** imagination/idea/understanding
30 **matter** genuine substance
31 **ornament** i.e. descriptive words

34 **sum up sum** calculate the total

Act 3 Scene 1

3.1 **Location: a public place in Verona**

3 **scape** escape

6 **claps me** claps (**me** is emphatic)

7 **by ... cup** by the time his second drink has taken effect

8 **draws ... drawer** draws his sword on the innkeeper

11 **jack** knave

11 **mood** anger

12 **moved** provoked

13 **to be** at being

15 **two** puns on **to**

22 **meat** edible matter

22 **addle** rotten/muddled, confused

26 **doublet** close-fitting jacket with a flared base

26 **Easter** i.e. the time after Lent when new clothes were worn

28 **from** to avoid

30 **fee-simple** absolute possession (term relating to property)

30 **for ... quarter** i.e. were he so quarrelsome, his life would be over very soon

32 **simple** foolish

42 **consort'st** associate with (Mercutio deliberately interprets this as “play in a musical group, or consort”)

43 **minstrels** musicians

44 **look** expect

49 **coldly** calmly

54 **your livery** the uniform of your servant (Mercutio has deliberately interpreted **man** as “manservant”)

55 **go ... field** should you go to the duelling field

55 **follower** manservant/pursuer

60 **excuse ... greeting** excuse me from displaying the rage that is the appropriate response to such a greeting

66 **devise** conceive

68 **tender** value/cherish

71 **Alla stoccado** Italian fencing term meaning “at the thrust” (here a reference to Tybalt)

71 **carries it away** wins the day

72 **will you walk** are you leaving/will you walk aside with me (for a duel)

75 **make bold withal** take liberties with

75 **as ... hereafter** depending on how you treat me subsequently

76 **dry-beat** beat severely (without using a sword)

77 **pilcher** scabbard

81 **passado** forward thrust with one foot advanced

83 **forbear** stop

85 **bandying** exchanging blows

86 **Hold** desist

88 **sped** gone, dispatched

92 **villain** rogue/servant

96 **grave** serious, dignified/dead and buried

96 **peppered** done for, ruined

99 **by ... arithmetic** by the fencing manual/precisely

107 **ally** relative

108 **very** true

113 **temper** disposition (plays on the sense of “hardness of a sword after it has been tempered, i.e. heated and immersed in water”)

115 **aspired** ascended to

117 **more** i.e. future

117 **depend** hang over

118 **others** i.e. other days

121 **respective lenity** considerate mercy, discriminating mildness

122 **conduct** guide

128 **consort** associate with

130 **This** i.e. his sword

133 **amazed** overwhelmed/stunned/bewildered

133 **doom** sentence

- 135 **fool** dupe/plaything/jester
- 141 **charge** order
- 143 **discover** reveal
- 144 **unlucky** unfortunate/ill-omened
- 144 **manage** conduct
- 144 **fatal** deadly/fateful
- 147 **cousin** a general term for a relative
- 155 **nice** trivial
- 155 **withal** moreover
- 158 **take truce** make peace
- 158 **spleen** fiery temper
- 159 **tilts** thrusts
- 162 **with one ... back** Mercutio is fighting with a dagger in one hand, with which he deflects blows, and a sword in the other, with which he attacks
- 165 **Retorts** returns
- 169 **envious** malicious
- 170 **stout** brave
- 171 **by and by** immediately
- 178 **Affection** partiality/love
- 190 **interest** plays on the sense of “legal claim”
- 190 **proceeding** plays on the sense of “legal action”
- 191 **My blood** Mercutio was the prince’s relative
- 192 **amerce** punish
- 195 **purchase out abuses** redeem these wrongs
- 199 **Mercy ... kill** i.e. leniency merely encourages murder

Act 3 Scene 2

3.2 Location: the Capulets’ house

- 1 **apace** swiftly
- 2 **Phoebus** Greek god of the sun, whose chariot was drawn by fiery horses
- 2 **lodging** i.e. the west, where the sun sets
- 3 **Phaethon** Phoebus’ son, who, unable to control his father’s chariot, was felled by one of Zeus’ thunderbolts when he burned part of the earth

- 5 **close** private/secretive/enclosing
- 6 **runaway's** i.e. Phaethon's/any roaming fugitive's/a night wanderer's
- 6 **wink** close
- 10 **civil** soberly dressed/grave/seemly
- 12 **learn** teach
- 12 **lose ... match** Juliet will win Romeo by surrendering to him
- 13 **maidenhoods** virginites (those of Juliet and Romeo)
- 14 **Hood** cover up, blindfold (as a hawk was when it was not pursuing game)
- 14 **unmanned** untrained (another term from falconry; plays on the sense of "without a husband")
- 14 **bating** fluttering impatiently (used of a hawk; puns on "beating")
- 15 **strange** new, unfamiliar/reserved, shy
- 21 **die** may play on the sense of "orgasm"
- 27 **possessed** with sexual connotations (like **enjoyed**) *CORDS* i.e. the rope ladder
- 38 **welladay** expression of sorrow
- 39 **undone** ruined
- 41 **envious** malicious/full of ill-will at Juliet's happiness
- 49 **cockatrice** basilisk, a mythical reptile with a gaze that could kill
- 51 **those eyes shut** i.e. Romeo's eyes, shut in death
- 53 **weal** well-being
- 55 **God ... mark** an apologetic exclamation excusing the mention of unpleasant matters
- 58 **gore-blood** congealing blood
- 59 **break** plays on the sense of "become financially ruined"
- 61 **Vile earth** i.e. her body
- 61 **resign** surrender (yourself)
- 61 **motion** movement, i.e. life (plays on sense of "strong emotion")
- 62 **bier** stretcher-like structure on which a corpse is carried to the grave
- 68 **lord** husband
- 69 **trumpet** i.e. the last trumpet, the sound of which, according to the Bible, would announce the end of the world
- 76 **keep** live in

- 80 **Just** exact (**justly** shifts the sense to “truly, rightfully”)
- 83 **bower** shelter/lodge
- 90 **dissemblers** deceivers
- 91 **aqua vitae** strong alcoholic drink (literally “water of life”)
- 102 **poor my lord** my poor lord
- 107 **tributary** serving as an offering or tribute (playing on the sense of “stream-like”)
- 121 **needly** of necessity
- 121 **ranked** accompanied/drawn up in rows (like soldiers)
- 123 **Thy ... mother** i.e. news of one of their deaths
- 124 **modern ... moved** might have provoked ordinary sorrow
- 125 **rearward** rearguard action (“ward” puns on “word”)
- 130 **word’s death** word’s fatal nature (or possibly “word is death”)
- 130 **sound** give voice to/measure the depth of
- 136 **beguiled** deceived, foiled
- 143 **wot** know

Act 3 Scene 3

3.3 *Location: Friar Laurence’s cell*

- 1 **fearful** full of fear
- 2 **parts** personal or physical qualities
- 4 **doom** judgement
- 10 **doomsday** Judgement Day, the end of the world (i.e. death)
- 11 **vanished** was expelled, issued into thin air
- 18 **without** outside of
- 20 **Hence banishèd** banished from here
- 21 **world’s exile** exile from the world
- 26 **Thy ... death** legally, the crime that you have committed requires the death penalty
- 27 **rushed** forced
- 34 **validity** worth
- 35 **courtship** courtliness/wooing
- 36 **carrion-flies** flies that feed on rotting flesh

- 39 **vestal** virginal
- 40 **their own kisses** the fact that they naturally touch one another
- 45 **mean** lowly, base
- 45 **mean** method
- 46 **But ... Banishèd** the sequence of clauses is confusing here, suggesting some textual error, perhaps due to undeleted authorial first thoughts; Folio omits a Second Quarto line, "They are freemen, but I am banishèd", whereas it should perhaps have deleted this line instead
- 49 **divine** clergyman
- 52 **fond** foolish (plays on sense of "loving")
- 57 **Yet** still
- 57 **Hang up** hang
- 59 **Displant** uproot
- 63 **dispute** reason, talk
- 63 **estate** situation
- 64 **that** that which
- 67 **Doting** loving madly
- 75 **taken** arrested
- 77 **simpleness** foolishness
- 85 **even** exactly
- 85 **case** state (the nurse unintentionally plays on the sense of "vagina")
- 86 **sympathy** unity, affinity
- 89 **stand** unconscious play on "get an erection" (**rise** has the same connotations)
- 89 **an** if
- 91 **O** groan (plays on sense of "vagina")
- 93 **Death** plays on sense of "orgasm"
- 95 **old** practiced, experienced
- 99 **cancelled** invalidated, nullified (puns on **concealed**)
- 102 **on Romeo cries** calls upon Romeo/cries out against Romeo
- 105 **level** aim
- 109 **sack** plunder, destroy
- 118 **tempered** balanced (plays on "temper," i.e. **disposition**)

- 123 **heaven, and earth** i.e. soul and body
- 125 **Fie** expression of reproach or disgust
- 125 **wit** intelligence, reason
- 126 **Which** (you) who
- 126 **usurer** moneylender (notorious for charging high interest)
- 127 **in ... use** for its proper purpose (**use** plays on the sense of “financial interest”)
- 128 **bedeck** adorn
- 128 **shape** physical appearance
- 130 **Digressing** deviating
- 130 **valour** honor/courage
- 134 **Misshapen** deformed/ill-directed
- 134 **conduct** guidance/management
- 135 **powder** gunpowder
- 135 **flask** container for gunpowder
- 137 **dismembered ... defence** blown to bits by the weapon that should have been used to protect you (i.e. **wit/powder**) 139 **dead** i.e. suicidal
- 140 **happy** fortunate
- 145 **array** clothing
- 146 **mishavèd** misbehaved
- 149 **decreed** decided (earlier)
- 151 **watch be set** night watchmen take up their posts at the city gates
- 154 **blaze** proclaim, make public
- 154 **friends** relatives
- 160 **apt unto** ready for
- 169 **here ... state** your fortunes depend on what happens now
- 173 **signify** inform you
- 174 **good hap** favorable event
- 177 **brief** hurriedly

Act 3 Scene 4

3.4 Location: the Capulets' house

2 **move** persuade/encourage

- 11 **mewed ... heaviness** confined with her sorrow (a “mew” was a cage for a moulting hawk)
- 12 **desperate** reckless/bold
- 12 **tender** offer
- 16 **son** (future) son-in-law
- 17 **mark you me** listen to me, pay attention
- 24 **ado** fuss
- 25 **late** recently
- 26 **held him carelessly** did not regard him highly
- 33 **against** in anticipation of
- 35 **Afore me!** either an instruction to a servant bearing a light or a mild oath
- Act 3 Scene 5
- 7 **envious** malicious/jealous
- 8 **severing** separating (the **clouds** drift apart, and in doing so will separate Romeo and Juliet)
- 9 **jocund** merry, sprightly
- 13 **meteor ... exhales** ill-omened meteors were believed to be formed of vapors drawn up (“exhaled”) from the earth by the sun
- 17 **ta'en** arrested
- 18 **so thou** provided
- 20 **reflex** reflection
- 20 **Cynthia** another name for the goddess of the moon
- 22 **vaulty** vaulted, arched
- 23 **care** concern/inclination
- 26 **hie** hurry
- 28 **Straining** singing (plays on the sense of “forcing, making an unnatural effort”)
- 29 **division** rapid melodic music
- 31 **change** exchange
- 33 **arm from arm** from one another’s arms
- 33 **affray** frighten
- 34 **hunt’s-up** song used to rouse hunters in the morning and sometimes played to the bride the morning after her wedding

- 43 **friend** lover
- 46 **much in years** very old
- 54 **ill-divining** foreseeing evil
- 59 **Dry** thirsty (each sigh was thought to drain the heart of a drop of blood)
- 67 **not ... late** not yet in bed
- 68 **procures** brings
- 73 **An if** even if
- 76 **feeling** powerfully felt
- 77 **feel** experience (the **loss**)/touch (the living **friend**) **friend** relative (in her response Juliet privately intends “lover”)
- 87 **like** so much as
- 87 **grieve** make sorrowful/anger, vex
- 93 **runagate** fugitive
- 94 **dram** measure (of poisoned drink)
- 97 **be satisfied** be content/be revenged (on)/have enough (of)/be sexually satisfied
- 98 **dead** can apply to either **him** or to **heart**
- 99 **kinsman** cousin (Tybalt)/husband (Romeo)
- 101 **temper** mix/modify and make safe
- 103 **sleep in quiet** die/fall into a harmless sleep
- 105 **wreak** avenge/bestow
- 109 **needy** destitute
- 111 **careful** caring, solicitous
- 113 **sorted out** chosen
- 114 **looked not for** did not expect
- 115 **in happy time** this is opportune
- 116 **Marry** plays on the marital sense of the word
- 133 **conduit** fountain
- 135 **counterfeits** imitates
- 135 **bark** small ship
- 138 **flood** sea/torrent
- 140 **overset** overwhelm/capsize

- 144 **would** wish
- 145 **take ... you** let me understand you properly
- 146 **How** what
- 147 **her** herself
- 148 **wrought** arranged (for)/persuaded
- 152 **hate ... love** something hateful that was nevertheless arranged for me out of love
- 153 **Chopped-logic** specious, false logic or one who argues in such a manner
- 157 **fettle** prepare; literally, “groom (a horse)”
- 159 **hurdle** frame on which traitors were dragged to execution
- 160 **Out** expression of indignation and scorn
- 160 **green-sickness** anaemic illness affecting pubescent girls, hence “pale”
- 160 **carrion** corpse/worthless wretch
- 161 **tallow** animal fat used for making candles and soap
- 161 **tallow-face** person with a pale, waxen face
- 169 **itch** i.e. to beat you
- 173 **hilding** hussy, good-for-nothing
- 175 **rate** berate, scold
- 177 **smatter** chatter, talk ignorantly
- 177 **gossips** women friends
- 179 **God ... e'en** i.e. for God's sake/go away (literally, good evening)
- 182 **gravity** words of wisdom
- 182 **bowl** drinking vessel
- 185 **God's bread** an oath referring to the bread used in the Christian sacrament of Communion
- 187 **still** always
- 190 **demesnes** lands
- 191 **parts** qualities
- 193 **puling** whining
- 194 **mammet** doll/contemptible weakling
- 194 **in ... tender** when fortune makes her an offer
- 197 **pardon** the sense now shifts from “excuse, forgive” to “give permission to

leave”

199 **do ... jest** am not in the habit of joking

200 **advise** consider

205 **be forsworn** break my word

211 **monument** tomb

215 **faith** i.e. marriage vows

219 **practise** plot

224 **all ... nothing** the odds are overwhelming

225 **challenge** lay claim to

230 **dishclout** dishcloth

231 **quick** lively/keen

232 **Beshrew** curse

236 **use** plays on the sense of “sexual employment”

240 **Amen** expression of agreement (to the Nurse’s advice/to **besrew them both**)

247 **Ancient damnation!** Damned old woman!

248 **forsworn** perjured (by breaking marriage vows)

252 **bosom** i.e. private thoughts

252 **twain** separated

Act 4 Scene 1

4.1 Location: Friar Laurence’s cell

3 **nothing slow** in no way reluctant

4 **mind** opinion

8 **Venus** the goddess/the planet

8 **house** plays on the astrological senses of “one of the twelve parts of the heavens” and “sign of the zodiac in which a particular planet has influence”

10 **sway** rule, influence

13 **minded** dwelt on, attended to

14 **society** companionship

18 **Happily** gladly/fortunately

22 **text** saying, proverb

28 **price** value

- 35 **my face** openly/about my face
- 37 **not mine own** Juliet privately means “as my face belongs to Romeo”
- 40 **pensive** sorrowful, full of melancholy musing
- 42 **shield** forbid
- 48 **compass** bounds
- 49 **prorogue** defer
- 55 **presently** immediately
- 58 **label** seal (technically the strip of paper to which the seal was affixed)
- 58 **deed** action/legal document
- 60 **both** i.e. hand and heart
- 61 **time** age
- 63 **extremes** desperate hardships
- 64 **umpire** technically, one brought in to decide a legal matter when arbitrators cannot agree
- 65 **commission** authority/authority to perform judicial functions
- 65 **art** skill, knowledge
- 66 **issue** outcome
- 76 **That cop’st** you who would embrace
- 80 **thievish ways** streets frequented by thieves
- 82 **charnel-house** vault containing dead bodies
- 84 **reeky shanks** stinking shinbones
- 84 **chapless** jawless
- 95 **distilling** distilled/infusing
- 95 **liquor** liquid
- 95 **off** i.e. entirely
- 97 **humour** fluid
- 98 **native** natural
- 98 **surcease** cease
- 101 **wanny wan**, pale
- 101 **eyes’ windows** i.e. eyelids
- 103 **supple government** power of movement

115 **against** in anticipation of the time when

116 **drift** scheme/intention

121 **toy** aversion/whim

124 **prosperous** successful/fortunate

127 **help afford** supply help

Act 4 Scene 2

4.2 *Location: the Capulets' house*

2 **cunning** skillful

3 **none ill** no bad ones

3 **try** test

6 'tis ... **fingers** proverbial phrase for one who has no faith in his abilities

10 **unfurnished** unprovided, unprepared

12 **forsooth** indeed, in truth

14 **peevish** foolish/obstinate/headstrong

14 **harlotry** harlot/wretch

16 **gadding** wandering, roving idly

19 **behests** commands

26 **becomèd** befitting, seemly

33 **closet** private room

34 **ornaments** clothing/accessories

38 **short** lacking

42 **deck up her** adorn her, prepare her

45 **They** i.e. the servants

45 **forth** out of the house (on errands)

Act 4 Scene 3

4.3 *Location: Juliet's bedroom in the Capulets' house*

3 **orisons** prayers

5 **cross** perverse/unfavorable

7 **culled** selected

8 **behoveful** useful, necessary

8 **state** ceremony

16 **thrills** pierces/passes with a shudder of emotion

20 **dismal** ominous/disastrous

26 **Subtly** craftily

30 **still** always

30 **tried** proved

36 **strangled ere** suffocated before

37 **like** likely

38 **conceit** conception, idea

43 **green in earth** newly buried (**green** also suggests putrefying flesh)

48 **mandrakes** plants with forked roots that resembled the human form and were said to shriek when pulled from the ground, causing madness or death in any who heard them

50 **distraught** driven to madness

51 **Environèd** surrounded

54 **rage** madness

57 **spit** impale

58 **Stay** stop

Act 4 Scene 4

2 **quinces** pear-shaped fruits

2 **pastry** room in which pastry dishes were made

4 **curfew-bell** bell that rang at a fixed hour in the morning

5 **baked meats** meat pies

5 **Angelica** either the Nurse or Lady Capulet (plays on the herb of the same name)

7 **cotquean** man who interferes with the housework

9 **watching** wakefulness

12 **mouse-hunt** hunter of mice (i.e. women, hence “fornicator”)

13 **watch ... watching** keep an eye on you to prevent such wakeful (sexual) behavior

14 **A jealous hood** jealousy/a jealous woman/a jealous spy (wearing a hood as a disguise)

20 **I ... logs** I have a good head for finding things/having a wooden (i.e. stupid) head I can easily find logs

- 22 **Mass** by the Mass (a common oath)
- 22 **whoreson** bastard, whore's son (spoken jovially)
- 23 **logger-head** in charge of fetching logs/a blockhead
- 24 **straight** straight away
- 27 **trim her up** adorn her, deck her out
- 32 **Fast** fast asleep
- 35 **take your pennyworths** take what little sleep you can/sleep soundly
- 37 **set ... rest** determined (literally a card-playing term meaning "to stake all" and playing on the sense of "got an erection in preparation for the assault")
- 41 **take** find/have sex with
- 42 **fright** puns on "freight" (i.e. to load, burden)
- 43 **down** in bed
- 58 **Out, alas** expression of sorrow
- 74 **living** being alive/possessions and property
- 75 **thought long** longed/been impatient
- 79 **lasting** endless/unceasing
- 82 **caught** seized
- 89 **Beguiled** deceived, cheated
- 94 **Uncomfortable** comfortless/disquieting
- 95 **solemnity** celebration, marriage ceremony
- 99 **Confusion** disorder/destruction/disaster
- 99 **care** management, control
- 105 **promotion** social advancement (through marriage to Paris)
- 106 **heaven** idea of bliss, of the utmost good
- 113 **stick** fasten/place/attach as an adornment
- 113 **rosemary** the herb symbolized fidelity and remembrance, and was used at weddings and funerals
- 117 **reason's merriment** i.e. laughably irrational/a cause of joy to reason
- 118 **ordainèd festival** intended to be festive
- 119 **office** function, appointed role
- 121 **cheer** food and drink, provisions
- 122 **solemn** ceremonious

- 122 **sullen** sombre, melancholy
- 128 **lour** frown, look threateningly
- 128 **ill** wrongdoing
- 129 **Move** provoke
- 130 **put up** put away, pack up
- 132 **case** situation (the First Musician then plays on the sense of “case for a musical instrument”)
- 133 **amended** repaired
- 134 “**Heart’s ease**” a popular song
- 137 “**My ... woe**” another popular song, possibly the “Ballad of Two Lovers”
- 138 **dump** melody/mournful tune
- 142 **soundly** thoroughly/with force (plays in the sense of “audibly, with sound”)
- 144 **gleek** gibe, jest (to “give the gleek” meant to mock someone)
- 144 **give ... minstrel** call you a minstrel (i.e. a vagrant or worthless wanderer)
- 146 **serving-creature** derogatory term for a servingman
- 148 **pate** head
- 148 **carry no crotchets** put up with no whims/sing none of these notes
- 148 **re ... you re** and fa are musical notes, used here as if they were verbs meaning “to beat”
- 149 **note** pay attention to (plays on the sense of “record in musical notation”; in his response the First Musician widens the pun to include “beat us so that we are marked like a musical score”)
- 151 **put out** extinguish/display
- 153 **dry-beat** beat severely (without using a **dagger**)
- 155 **When ... sound** the opening lines of Richard Edwards’ song “In Commendation of Music,” published in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576)
- 155 **griping** painful/grasping
- 158 **Catling** a small lute-string made from catgut
- 160 **prates** mere chatter
- 160 **Rebeck** a rebec was a medieval three-stringed fiddle
- 161 **sound for silver** play for money
- 163 **Soundpost** a supporting wooden peg on a violin or similar instrument
- 165 **cry you mercy** beg your pardon

167 **for sounding** as payment for playing/with which to make a jingling sound

171 **Jack** the rogue

172 **stay** await

Act 5 Scene 1

5.1 *Location: Mantua*

1 **flattering** pleasing/deceptive

2 **presage** foretell

3 **bosom's lord** i.e. heart

10 **possessed** actually experienced, enjoyed

11 **shadows** images, dreams

21 **presently took post** immediately set off with a post-horse (i.e. horse kept standing by for the speedy delivery of messages)

23 **for my office** as my responsibility

24 **deny** repudiate, renounce (some editors emend to the First Quarto's "defy")

26 **post-horses** horses kept at inns for the use of messengers or for hire by travelers

28 **import** suggest, portend

29 **misadventure** fatal misfortune

37 **see for** seek out, think about

37 **mischieff** calamity, harm, wicked deeds

39 **apothecary** person who prepared and sold drugs

40 **a** he

40 **which** whom

41 **weeds** clothing

41 **overwhelming brows** overhanging or bushy eyebrows

42 **Culling of simples** gathering medicinal herbs

44 **needy** impoverished

47 **account** number

48 **earthen** earthenware

48 **bladders** animal bladders were used for storing liquid

49 **packthread** twine used for tying up packages

49 **cakes of roses** preparation of rose petals compressed into a cake for use as

perfume

53 **Whose ... death** the sale of which is punishable by instant death

54 **caitiff** miserable/base

62 **ducats** gold coins used in most European countries

63 **soon-speeding gear** rapidly working stuff/stuff that kills quickly

65 **That** so that

66 **trunk** body/cylindrical case that discharges explosives in a weapon

69 **mortal** fatal

70 **he** man

70 **utters** sells

77 **it** i.e. the law

79 **pray** entreat (some editors emend to the First Quarto's "pay")

85 **compounds** mixtures

87 **get ... flesh** fatten yourself up

88 **cordial** medicine that invigorates the heart

Act 5 Scene 2

5.2 *Location: Friar Laurence's cell*

5 **barefoot brother** i.e. a fellow Franciscan friar

6 **associate** accompany

8 **searchers** officials whose job was to view dead bodies and ascertain the cause of death

10 **pestilence** plague

12 **speed** successful journey, rapid progress

12 **stayed** prevented

18 **nice** trivial

18 **charge** importance

19 **dear import** major significance/costly consequence

20 **danger** harm

21 **crow** crowbar

27 **accidents** events

Act 5 Scene 3

5.3 Location: the churchyard containing the Capulet family tomb, Verona; the action moves into the tomb itself

1 **aloof** at a distance

3 **lay ... along** lie stretched out

6 **Being** i.e. the soil being

10 **stand** remain

11 **adventure** risk it, take my chances

13 **canopy** covering or hangings of a bed

16 **obsequies** rites of remembrance

20 **cross** thwart *mattock* pickaxe *wrenching iron* crowbar

32 **dear employment** important business/costly purpose

33 **jealous** suspicious

43 **For ... same** all the same, nonetheless

44 **doubt** suspect/fear

45 **maw** throat/stomach

45 **womb** belly

48 **in despite** in angry defiance/to spite you

54 **unhallowed** unholy, wicked

60 **gone** dead

68 **commiseration** compassion

78 **should have** was to have

80 **him** i.e. Paris

83 **triumphant** splendid

84 **lantern** many-windowed turret-like structure often found at the top of a church

86 **presence** reception room in a palace or great house

89 **keepers** nurses/jailers

94 **ensign** military banner

96 **advancèd** raised

100 **his ... enemy** i.e. Romeo's own

103 **unsubstantial** bodiless

106 **still** always

110 **true** honest/true to his trade

119 **dateless bargain** eternal contract

119 **engrossing** monopolizing/all-consuming (with legal connotations: “to engross” is “to write in a manner appropriate to legal documents”)

120 **conduct** guide (i.e. the poison)

122 **dashing** destructive

124 **quick** speedy/active (with a play on “invigorating/life-giving”)

125 **speed** protector, aid

129 **vainly** pointlessly

154 **unkind** unnatural/cruel

157 **comfortable** comforting

171 **timeless** untimely/eternal

172 **churl** miser/villain

174 **Haply** perhaps/with luck

178 **happy** fortunate/opportune

182 **attach** arrest

189 **ground** cause (quibbles on the literal meaning in the previous line)

190 **circumstance** details (perhaps with a play on sense of “physical surroundings”)

196 **stay** detain

212 **mista'en** mistaken its rightful **house** (i.e. sheath)

216 **warns** summons

216 **sepulchre** tomb

219 **is dead tonight** died last night

223 **untaught** ignorant, unmannerly person (referring to Romeo, whose body he has seen)

225 **mouth of outrage** may refer to the tomb or to the characters who are reacting to events (or both)

225 **outrage** violence/disorder/passionate outcry

227 **spring, their head** source

228 **general** leader

229 **to death** to the utmost/to death from grief/to securing death as the penalty for the wrongdoers

230 **slave to** governed by

234 **make against** conspire against, accuse

235 **impeach ... excused** accuse myself of what I should be condemned for and exonerate myself where I deserve to be excused

238 **date of breath** amount of remaining life

247 **perforce** by compulsion

252 **art** skill, knowledge

254 **wrought** brought about/fashioned

256 **as on**

260 **stayed** detained

264 **closely** secretly, concealed

268 **true** faithful, constant

275 **privy** aware, in on the secret

275 **aught** anything

277 **the time** its natural limit

279 **still** always

282 **post** haste

289 **made** did

293 **by and by** immediately

295 **make good** confirm

298 **therewithal** that being accomplished/with the poison

301 **scourge** punishment of divine origin

302 **joys** happiness/children

303 **winking at** shutting my eyes to

304 **brace** pair (i.e. Mercutio and Paris)

306 **jointure** marriage portion given by the bridegroom's family

309 **raise** have constructed

309 **statue** almost certainly a reclining figure that would be set on Juliet's tomb

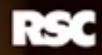
311 **figure** statue (plays on the sense of "number")

311 **rate be set** worth be valued

313 **Romeo** i.e. Romeo's statue

314 Poor sacrifices of pitiful victims of/inadequate atonements for

315 glooming gloomy/darkened/frowning/melancholy



RSC

ROMEO
AND
JULIET



William
Shakespeare

Edited by Jonathan Bate
and Eric Rasmussen

