

Connect to the Literature

1. What Do You Think?

Which character in Act One appealed to you the most? Why?

Comprehension Check

- What warning does the Prince issue to the Capulets and Montagues?
- What agreement is reached between Paris and Juliet's father?
- Why does Romeo go to the party?

Think Critically

2. How would you describe Romeo and his attitude toward love?
3. In your opinion, how might Juliet be changed by meeting Romeo?

THINK ABOUT

- her reaction when Lady Capulet tells her of Paris's proposal
- her response to Romeo at the party
- what the speech beginning "My only love, sprung from my only hate!" indicates about her understanding of the circumstances

4. A **foil** is a character that highlights, through sharp contrast, another character's personality or attitudes. Identify two characters in Act One who are foils for each other. What do you learn about each character by seeing them in this way?

5. ACTIVE READING READING SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Look at the graphic that you are working on in your



READER'S NOTEBOOK. As you review the events that have occurred in Act One, which ones seem the most important in setting up **conflicts** in the **plot**? Explain.

Extend Interpretations

6. **Critic's Corner** William Hazlitt, a well-known 19th-century British writer, had the following praise for Shakespeare's ability to create **characters**: "By an art like that of the ventriloquist, he throws his imagination out of himself, and makes every word appear to proceed from the mouth of the person in whose name it is given." Based on what you have read so far, do you agree with this assessment? Support your opinion with evidence.
7. **Connect to Life** The feud between the Montagues and Capulets has continued for a long time. What sorts of longstanding disputes exist today in communities and nations? Why do you think these conflicts are so hard to resolve?

Literary Analysis

BLANK VERSE **Blank verse**

consists of unrhymed lines of **iambic pentameter**, in which a typical line has five unstressed syllables each followed by a stressed syllable. The rhythms of blank verse are closest to those of natural speech, and because of this, blank verse is particularly suited for drama.

My líps, tŵo blúshing pígríms, réady stánd
(Act One, Scene 5, line 104)

Lines of blank verse can also contain variations—a change in the order of stressed and unstressed syllables, an extra syllable added, or one left out. For example, in this line spoken by Lord Capulet, there is an extra syllable:

Whěreto I háve ínvtíted mány á guést
(Act One, Scene 2, line 21)

Such variations contribute to giving the lines the flow and sound of spoken English.

Shakespeare also sometimes has characters speak in prose and sometimes in rhymed lines—usually couplets.

Paired Activity With a partner, find and copy four lines of blank verse from Act One of *Romeo and Juliet*. Mark the unstressed (˘) and stressed (ˈ) syllables in each line. Are there any variations in the rhythmic pattern? Discuss how well you think the passage captures the sound of spoken English and how this sound affects meaning.

Act Two, Scene 1. Juliet
thinks about her beloved
Romeo. (Luhrmann, 1996)



The Prologue

In a sonnet the CHORUS summarizes what has happened so far in the play. He reviews how Romeo and Juliet have fallen in love and suggests both the problems and delights they now face. He also includes hints about what will result from the events of Act One.

[Enter Chorus.]

Chorus. Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,
And young affection gapes to be his heir.
That fair for which love groaned for and would die,
With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair.
5 Now Romeo is beloved, and loves again,
Alike bewitched by the charm of looks;
But to his foe supposed he must complain,
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.
Being held a foe, he may not have access
10 To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new beloved anywhere;
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.

[Exit.]

1–4 old . . . heir: Romeo's love for Rosaline (**old desire**) is now dead. His new love (**young affection**) replaces the old. Compared to Juliet, Rosaline no longer seems so lovely.

6 What attracted Romeo and Juliet to each other?

7 But . . . complain: Juliet, a Capulet, Romeo's enemy; yet she is the one to whom he must plead (**complain**) his love.

9–12 What problem now faces Romeo and Juliet?

14 Temp'ring . . . sweet: moderating great difficulties with extreme delights.

ACT Two

SCENE 1 *A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.*

Later in the evening of the party, Romeo returns alone to the Capulet home, hoping for another glimpse of Juliet. He climbs the wall and hides outside, in the orchard. Meanwhile, Benvolio and Mercutio come looking for him, but he remains hidden behind the wall. Mercutio makes fun of Romeo and his lovesick condition. Keep in mind that Mercutio and Benvolio think Romeo is still in love with Rosaline, since they know nothing about his meeting with Juliet.

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[Enter Romeo alone.]

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

[Climbs the wall and leaps down within it.]

[Enter Benvolio with Mercutio.]

Benvolio. Romeo! my cousin Romeo! Romeo!

Mercutio. He is wise,
5 And, on my life, hath stol'n him home to bed.

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

Mercutio. Nay, I'll conjure too.
Romeo! humors! madman! passion! lover!
10 Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied!
Cry but "Ay me!" pronounce but "love" and "dove";
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,
One nickname for her purblind son and heir,
15 Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim
When King Cophetua loved the beggar maid!
He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;
The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
20 By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,

1-2 Can . . . out: How can I leave when Juliet is still here? My body (**dull earth**) has to find its heart (**center**).

8 conjure: use magic to call him.

10-23 Appear . . . us: Mercutio makes a series of loud jokes about Romeo's lovesickness. He tries to make Romeo appear by teasing him and suggestively naming parts of Rosaline's body.
demesnes: areas.



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

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

25 **Mercutio.** This cannot anger him. 'Twould anger him
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle
Of some strange nature, letting it there stand
Till she had laid it and conjured it down.
That were some spite; my invocation
30 Is fair and honest and in his mistress' name
I conjure only but to raise up him.

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

35 **Mercutio.** If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar tree
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.
Oh, Romeo, that she were, O, that she were
40 An open et cetera, thou a pop'rin pear!
Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed;
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.
Come, shall we go?

Benvolio. Go then, for 'tis in vain
45 To seek him here that means not to be found.

[*Exeunt.*]

25–31 'Twould . . . raise up him: It would anger him if I called a stranger to join his lover (**mistress**), but I'm only calling Romeo to join her.

33 To be . . . night: to join with the night, which is as gloomy as Romeo is.

36 medlar: a fruit that looks like a small brown apple.

41–45 Romeo . . . found: Mercutio jokes that he will go to his child's bed (**truckle bed**) since he is so "innocent."

SCENE 2 *Capulet's orchard.*

The following is one of the most famous scenes in all literature. The speeches contain some of the most beautiful poetry Shakespeare ever wrote.

Juliet appears on the balcony outside her room. She cannot see Romeo, who stands in the garden just below. At the beginning of the scene, both characters are speaking private thoughts to themselves. Romeo, however, can hear Juliet as she expresses her love for him despite his family name. Eventually, he speaks directly to her, and they declare their love for each other. Just before dawn Romeo leaves to make plans for their wedding.

[*Enter Romeo.*]

Romeo. He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[*Enter Juliet above at a window.*]

1 He jests: Mercutio makes jokes. What is Romeo saying about Mercutio?



But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
 It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!
 Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
 5 Who is already sick and pale with grief
 That thou her maid art far more fair than she.
 Be not her maid, since she is envious;
 Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
 And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
 10 It is my lady; O, it is my love!
 O that she knew she were!
 She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?
 Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
 I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks.
 15 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
 20 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
 Would through the airy region stream so bright
 That birds would sing and think it were not night.
 See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
 O that I were a glove upon that hand,
 25 That I might touch that cheek!

Juliet. Ay me!

Romeo. She speaks.

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

35 **Juliet.** O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore 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.

Romeo. [*Aside*] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at
 40 this?

Juliet. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
 Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
 What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,

2–9 But soft . . . cast it off: Romeo sees Juliet at her window. For a moment he is speechless (**But soft:** be still), but then he describes her beauty in glowing images of light and the heavenly bodies. He compares Juliet's beauty to the sun and says the moon looks sick and green because it is jealous of her.

11–14 O that . . . speaks: Romeo shifts back and forth between wanting to speak to Juliet and being afraid. Why is he reluctant to let her know he is in the garden?

15–22 Two of . . . not night: Romeo compares Juliet's eyes to stars in the sky.

26 Remember that Juliet does not know that Romeo is listening.

28–34 thou art . . . of the air: He compares Juliet to an angel (**winged messenger of heaven**) who stands over (**bestrides**) the clouds.

35–38 wherefore: why. Juliet asks why the man she loves is named Montague, a name that she is supposed to hate. What does she ask him to do? What does she promise to do?



45 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 name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
50 Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

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

Juliet. What man art thou that, thus bescreened in
night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

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

Juliet. My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
65 Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound.
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

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

Juliet. How camest thou hither, tell me, and
wherefore?
70 The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

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

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

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

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

Romeo. I have night's cloak to hide me from their
sight;

46–52 Juliet tries to convince herself that a name is just a meaningless word that has nothing to do with the person. She asks Romeo to get rid of (**doff**) his name.

53–55 Romeo startles Juliet by speaking aloud.

56–58 How dare you, hiding (**bescreened**), listen to my private thoughts (**counsel**)?

68–69 **How . . . wherefore:** How did you get here, and why did you come?

73–78 **With . . . thee:** Love helped me climb (**o'erperch**) the walls. Neither you nor your relatives are a hindrance (**let**) to my love. (Romeo is carried away with emotion, but Juliet is more realistic.) What warning does she give?

80–81 **Look . . . enmity:** Smile on me, and I will be defended against your family's hatred (**enmity**).



Act Two, Scene 2. Romeo joins Juliet on the balcony to profess his love. (Zeffirelli, 1968)

85 And but thou love me, let them find me here.
 My life were better ended by their hate
 Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

Juliet. By whose direction foundst thou out this place?

Romeo. By love, that first did prompt me to enquire.

90 He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
 I am no pilot, yet, wert thou as far
 As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,
 I would adventure for such merchandise.

Juliet. Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face;

95 Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
 For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.
 Fain would I dwell on form—fain, fain deny
 What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!
 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “Ay”;
 100 And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swearst,
 Thou mayst prove false. At lovers’ perjuries,
 They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

86–87 My life . . . love: I’d rather die from their hatred than have my death postponed (**prorogued**) if you don’t love me.

94–98 Thou . . . compliment: Had I known you were listening, I would have gladly (**fain**) behaved more properly, but now it’s too late for good manners (**farewell compliment**). Why is Juliet embarrassed that Romeo overheard her?

101–102 At . . . laughs: Jove (the king of the gods) laughs at lovers who lie to each other. Why is Juliet worried?



105 Or if thou thinkst I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light;
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
110 Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheardst, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion. Therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
115 Which the dark night hath so discovered.

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

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

Romeo. What shall I swear by?

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

Romeo. If my heart's dear love—

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

Romeo. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Juliet. What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

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

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

Romeo. Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose,
love?

104–110 if . . . strange: You might think Juliet is
I've fallen in love too easily and that I'm being
too forward. But I'll be truer to you than
those who hide their feelings (**be
strange**) and play romantic games.

118–120 swear . . . variable: Why
doesn't Juliet want Romeo to swear by
the moon?

128–131 I have . . . lightens: Juliet is
worried about their love (**contract**),
which has happened as quickly as
lightning and could be gone as fast.
What is Juliet's attitude at this point?
Do you agree with her feelings about
the relationship?



Juliet. But to be frank and give it thee again.
145 And yet I wish but for the thing I have.
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.
I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!

[Nurse *calls within.*]

150 **Anon,** good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

[*Exit.*]

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

[*Re-enter Juliet, above.*]

155 **Juliet.** Three words, dear Romeo, and good night
indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
160 Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Nurse. [*Within*] Madam!

Juliet. I come, anon.—But if thou meanst not well,
165 I do beseech thee—

Nurse. [*Within*] Madam!

Juliet. By-and-by I come.—
To cease thy suit and leave me to my grief.
Tomorrow will I send.

170 **Romeo.** So thrive my soul—

Juliet. A thousand times good night! [*Exit.*]

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

[*Enter Juliet again, above.*]

175 **Juliet.** Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falc'ner's voice
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!

150–151 Anon: Right away! Juliet calls to her nurse but meanwhile asks Romeo to wait till she returns. The Nurse's repeated calls begin to create urgency and tension.

157–160 If that . . . rite: I'll send a messenger to you tomorrow. If your intention is to marry me, tell the messenger where and when the ceremony will be. Although in love, Juliet continues to be practical and wants proof that Romeo's intentions are serious.

173–174 Love . . . looks: The simile means that lovers meet as eagerly as schoolboys leave their books; lovers separate with the sadness of boys going to school.



180 Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud;
 Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
 And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine
 With repetition of my Romeo's name.
 Romeo!

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

185 **Juliet.** Romeo!

Romeo. My sweet?

Juliet. What o'clock tomorrow
 Shall I send to thee?

Romeo. By the hour of nine.

190 **Juliet.** I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then.
 I have forgot why I did call thee back.

Romeo. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

Juliet. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
 Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

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

Juliet. 'Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone—
 And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,
 That lets it hop a little from her hand,
 200 Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
 And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
 So loving-jealous of his liberty.

Romeo. I would I were thy bird.

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

[Exit.]

210 **Romeo.** Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy
 breast!

Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
 Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,
 His help to crave and my dear hap to tell.


[Exit.]

175–181 Hist . . . name: Listen, Romeo I wish I could speak your name as loud as a falconer calls his falcon (**tassel-gentle**), but because of my parents, I must whisper. Echo was a nymph in Greek mythology whose unreturned love for Narcissus caused her to waste away until only her voice was left.

187–188 The ever-practical Juliet asks details.

197–202 I would . . . liberty: I know you must go, but I want you close to me like a pet bird that a thoughtless child (**wanton**) keeps on a string.

212–213 ghostly father: spiritual advisor or priest. **dear hap:** good fortune



SCENE 3 *Friar Laurence's cell in the monastery.*

Romeo goes from Capulet's garden to the monastery where Friar Laurence lives. The friar knows Romeo well and often gives him advice. As the scene begins, Friar Laurence is gathering herbs in the early morning. He talks of good and bad uses for herbs. Keep this in mind, since Friar Laurence's skill at mixing herbs becomes important later in the play. Romeo tells the friar that he loves Juliet and wants to marry her. The friar is amazed that Romeo has forgotten about Rosaline so easily and suggests that Romeo might be acting in haste. Eventually, however, he agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet, hoping that the marriage might end the feud between their families.

[Enter Friar Laurence alone, with a basket.]

Friar Laurence. The grey-eyed morn smiles on the
frowning night,
Chequ'ring the Eastern clouds with streaks of light;
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
5 From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.
Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye
The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,
I must upfill this osier cage of ours
With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.
10 The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb,
What is her burying grave, that is her womb;
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find;
Many for many virtues excellent,
15 None but for some, and yet all different.
O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities;
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give;
20 Nor aught so good but, strained from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And vice sometime's by action dignified.
Within the infant rind of this small flower
25 Poison hath residence, and medicine power;
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
Two such opposed kings encamp them still
In man as well as herbs—grace and rude will;
30 And where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

1–31 Friar Laurence begins his speech by describing how night changes into day. He then speaks of the herbs he is collecting. The friar is particularly fascinated with the idea that in herbs as well as man both good and evil can exist.

5 Titan is the god whose chariot pulls the sun into the sky each morning.

8 osier cage: willow basket.

10–11 The earth . . . womb: The same earth that acts as a tomb, or burial ground, is also the womb, or birthplace, of useful plants.

16–19 mickle: great. The Friar says that nothing from the earth is so evil that it doesn't do some good.

24–27 Within . . . heart: He holds a flower that can be used either as a poison or a medicine. If the flower is smelled, its fragrance can improve health in each part of the body; if eaten, it causes death.

29 grace and rude will: good and evil. Both exist in people as well as in plants.



[Enter Romeo.]

Romeo. Good morrow, father.

Friar Laurence. Benedicite!

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?

35 Young son, it argues a distempered head
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed.
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
And where care lodges sleep will never lie;
But where unbruised youth with unstuffed brain
40 Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
Thou art uproused with some distemp'rature;
Or if not so, then here I hit it right—
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

45 **Romeo.** That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

Friar 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.

50 **Friar 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,
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me
55 That's by me wounded. Both our remedies
Within thy help and holy physic lies.
I bear no hatred, blessed man, for, lo,
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

Friar Laurence. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy
60 drift.

Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Romeo. Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set

On the fair daughter of rich Capulet;
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,
65 And all combined, save what thou must combine
By holy marriage. When, and where, and how
We met, we wooed, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us today.

33 Benedicite (bā'nā-dē'chī-tā'): Go bless you.

35–44 it argues . . . tonight: Only a disturbed (**distempered**) mind could make you get up so early. Old people have trouble sleeping, but it is not normal for someone as young as you. Or were you up all night?

46–47 God . . . Rosaline: The Friar is shocked that Romeo has not been to her yet. Where does he think Romeo has been?

52–61 Romeo tries to explain the situation and asks for help for both himself and his enemy (Juliet). In his excitement, Romeo talks in riddles, which confuse the Friar. The Friar tells Romeo to talk clearly.



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

Romeo. Thou chidst me oft for loving Rosaline.

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

Romeo. And badest me bury love.

90 **Friar Laurence.** Not in a grave
To lay one in, another ought to have.

Romeo. I pray thee chide not. She whom I love now
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.
The other did not so.

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

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

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

[*Exeunt.*]

73–74 Young . . . eyes: How would you paraphrase this sentence?

75–85 brine: salt water. The Friar is referring to the tears Romeo has been shedding for Rosaline. What is his opinion of Romeo's rapid change of affections from one girl to another?

86 Women . . . men: If men are so weak, women may be forgiven for sinning.

87–88 chidst: scolded. The Friar replies that he scolded Romeo for being lovesick, not for loving.

92–96 She whom . . . spell: Romeo says that the woman he loves feels the same way about him. That wasn't true of Rosaline. The Friar replies that Rosaline knew that he didn't know what real love is.

99–100 This marriage may work out well and turn the feud between your families into love.

102–103 How is the Friar's warning similar to Juliet's fears in the previous scene?



SCENE 4 *A street.*

Several hours after his meeting with Friar Laurence, Romeo meets Benvolio and Mercutio in the street. He is excited and happy; his mood is key to the comic nature of this scene, which includes much talk of swordplay and many suggestive jokes. Mercutio makes fun of Tybalt and teases Romeo. The Nurse comes to carry a message from Romeo to Juliet. Romeo tells her that Juliet should meet him at Friar Laurence's cell for their secret marriage ceremony.

[Enter Benvolio and Mercutio.]

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

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

Mercutio. Why, that same pale hard-hearted wench,
5 that Rosaline,
Torments him so that he will sure run mad.

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

Mercutio. A challenge, on my life.

10 **Benvolio.** Romeo will answer it.

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

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

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

Benvolio. Why, what is Tybalt?

20 **Mercutio.** More than Prince of Cats, I can tell you. O,
he's the courageous captain of compliments. He
fights as you sing pricksong—keeps time, distance,
and proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two,
and the third in your bosom! the very butcher of a
25 silk button, a duelist, a duelist! a gentleman of the
very first house, of the first and second cause. Ah,
the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the hay!

Benvolio. The what?

30 **Mercutio.** The pox of such antic, lispings, affecting
fantasticoes—these new tuners of accent! “By Jesu, a
very good blade! a very tall man! a very good

3 man: servant.

7–13 Tybalt . . . dared: The hot-head Tybalt has sent a letter to Romeo, challenging him to a duel. He is obviously still angry about Romeo's crashing the Capulet party. Benvolio says that Romeo will do more than answer the letter; he will accept Tybalt's challenge and fight him.

17 blind bow-boy's butt-shaft: Cupid's dull practice arrows; Mercutio suggests that Romeo fell in love with very little work on Cupid's part.

20–27 More than . . . hay: Mercutio mocks Tybalt's name. Prince of Cats refers to a cat in a fable named “Tybalt” that was known for its slyness. Then Mercutio makes fun of Tybalt's fancy new method of dueling, comparing it to precision singing (**pricksong**). **Passado, punto, reverso,** and **hay** were terms used in the new dueling style.

29–37 The pox . . . their bones: As in his previous speech, Mercutio makes fun of people who, like Tybalt, try to impress everyone with their knowledge of the latest fashions in dueling.



whore!" Why, is not this a lamentable thing,
grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these
strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these
35 perdonami's, who stand so much on the new form
that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O,
their bones, their bones!

[Enter Romeo, no longer moody.]

Benvolio. Here comes Romeo! here comes Romeo!

Mercutio. Without his roe, like a dried herring. O,
40 flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the
numbers that Petrarch flow'd in. Laura, to his lady,
was but a kitchen wench (marry, she had a better
love to berhyme her) Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a
gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots, Thisbe
45 a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose. Signior
Romeo, bon jour! There's a French salutation to your
French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last
night.

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

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

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

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

Romeo. Meaning, to curtsy.

Mercutio. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Romeo. A most courteous exposition.

Mercutio. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

Romeo. Pink for flower.

Mercutio. Right.

Romeo. Why, then is my pump well-flowered.

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

Romeo. Oh, single-soled jest, solely singular for the
singleness!

39–45 without his roe: he is only part of himself. Mercutio makes fun of Romeo's name and his lovesickness.

numbers: verses. Mercutio mentions Petrarch, who wrote sonnets to his love, Laura. He then makes insulting comments about famous lovers of the past.

46–51 bon jour: (French) good day. Here's a greeting to match your fancy French trousers (**slop**). You did a good job of getting away from us last night. (A piece of counterfeit money was called a **slip**.)

51–97 In these lines, Romeo and Mercutio have a battle of wits. They keep trying to top each other with funnier comments and cleverer puns.

63 pump: shoe; **well-flowered:** shoes were "pinked," or punched out in flowerlike designs.



70 **Mercutio.** Come between us, good Benvolio! My wits faint.

Romeo. Switch and spurs, switch and spurs! or I'll cry a match.

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

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

80 **Mercutio.** I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Romeo. Nay, good goose, bite not!

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

Romeo. And is it not, then, well served in to a sweet
85 goose?

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

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

Mercutio. 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
95 by nature. For this driveling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

Benvolio. Stop there, stop there!

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

Benvolio. Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

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

[Enter Nurse and Peter, her servant. He is carrying a large fan.]

Romeo. Here's goodly gear!

Mercutio. A sail, a sail!

72–73 Switch . . . match: Keep going or I'll claim victory.

77 Was . . . goose?: Have I proved that you are a foolish person (**goose**)?

86 cheveril: kid skin, which is flexible. Mercutio means that a little wit stretches a long way.

95–97 great natural: an idiot like a jester or clown who carries a fool's stick (**bauble**). Mercutio is happy that Romeo is his old playful self again.

106–107 Goodly gear: something funny to joke about. A sail indicates that the Nurse in all her petticoats looks like a huge ship coming toward them.



Benvolio. Two, two! a shirt and a smock.

Nurse. Peter!

110 **Peter.** Anon.

Nurse. My fan, Peter.

Mercutio. Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's
the fairer of the two.

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

115 **Mercutio.** God ye good-den, fair gentlewoman.

Nurse. Is it good-den?

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

Nurse. Out upon you! What a man are you!

120 **Romeo.** One, gentlewoman, that God hath made
himself to mar.

Nurse. By my troth, it is well said. "For himself to mar,"
quoth'a? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I
may find the young Romeo?

125 **Romeo.** I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older
when you have found him than he was when you
sought him. I am the youngest of that name, for fault
of a worse.

Nurse. You say well.

130 **Mercutio.** Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, i' faith!
wisely, wisely.

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

Benvolio. She will endite him to some supper.

135 **Mercutio.** A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Romeo. What hast thou found?

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

[Sings.]

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

145 Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to

110 Anon: Right away.

111 Fans were usually carried only by fine ladies. The Nurse is trying to pretend that she is more than a servant.

132–134 confidence: The Nurse means conference; she uses big words without understanding their meaning. Benvolio makes fun of this by using endite instead of invite.

135–145 Mercutio calls the Nurse a **bawd**, or woman who runs a house of prostitution. His song uses the insulting puns **hare**, a rabbit or a prostitute, and **hoar**, old.



dinner thither.

Romeo. I will follow you.

Mercutio. Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, [*sings*] lady, lady, lady.

[*Exeunt* Mercutio and Benvolio.]

150 **Nurse.** Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant was this that was so full of his ropery?

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

155 **Nurse.** An 'a speak anything against me, I'll take him down, an 'a were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skainsmates. [*Turning to Peter.*] And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

151 ropery: roguery, or jokes.

158–161 The Nurse is angry that Mercutio treated her like one of his loo women (**flirt-gills**) or his gangsterlike friends (**skainsmates**). She then complains that Peter did not come to her defense.

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

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

169–175 The Nurse warns Romeo that he'd better mean what he said about marrying Juliet. She holds back her own news to make sure that Romeo's love is genuine.

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

176 commend me: give my respectful greetings.

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

180 **Romeo.** What wilt thou tell her, nurse? Thou dost not mark me.

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

Romeo. Bid her devise



185 Some means to come to shrift this afternoon;
And there she shall at Friar Laurence' cell
Be shrived and married. Here is for thy pains.

Nurse. No, truly, sir; not a penny.

Romeo. Go to! I say you shall.

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

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

Within this hour my man shall be with thee
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair,
Which to the high topgallant of my joy

195 Must be my convoy in the secret night.
Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.
Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

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

Romeo. What sayst thou, my dear nurse?

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

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

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

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

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

Romeo. Commend me to thy lady.

Nurse. Ay, a thousand times. [*Exit* Romeo.] Peter!

Peter. Anon.

220 **Nurse.** Peter, take my fan, and go before, and apace.
[*Exeunt.*]

184–187 Romeo tells the Nurse to have Juliet come to Friar Laurence's cell this afternoon using the excuse that she is going to confession (**shrift**). There she will receive forgiveness for her sins (**be shrived**) and be married.

193–194 tackled stair: a rope ladder.
topgallant: highest point.

196–201 quit thy pains: reward you. The Nurse asks Romeo if his servant can be trusted and quotes the saying that two can keep a secret, but not three.

203–207 The Nurse, as is her way, begins to babble on and on. She mentions Paris' proposal but says Juliet would rather look at a toad than at Paris.

210–216 clout . . . world: old cloth in the entire world. **Doth not . . . hear it:** The Nurse tries to recall a clever saying that Juliet made up about Romeo and rosemary, the herb for remembrance, but she cannot remember it. She is sure that the two words couldn't begin with R because this letter sounds like a snarling dog. The Nurse mistakenly says **sententious** when she means sentences.

220 apace: quickly.



SCENE 5 *Capulet's orchard.*

Juliet is a nervous wreck, having waited for more than three hours for the Nurse to return. When the Nurse does arrive, she simply can't come to the point. Juliet gets more and more upset, until the Nurse finally reveals the wedding arrangements.

[Enter Juliet.]

Juliet. The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;
In half an hour she promised to return.

Perchance she cannot meet him. That's not so.

O, she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,

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

Driving back shadows over lowering hills.

Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw Love,

And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.

Now is the sun upon the highmost hill

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

Is three long hours; yet she is not come.

Had she affections and warm youthful blood,

She would be as swift in motion as a ball;

My words would bandy her to my sweet love,

15 And his to me.

But old folks, many feign as they were dead—

Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

[Enter Nurse and Peter.]

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

Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

20 **Nurse.** Peter, stay at the gate.

[Exit Peter.]

Juliet. Now, good sweet nurse—O Lord, why lookst
thou sad?

Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;

If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news

25 By playing it to me with so sour a face.

Nurse. I am aweary, give me leave awhile.

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

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

Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good nurse,
30 speak.

4–6 Love's . . . hills: Love's messengers should be thoughts, which travel ten times faster than sunbeams.

14 bandy: toss.

16 feign as: act as if.

21–22 The Nurse teases Juliet by putting on a sad face as if the news were bad.

26–27 give me . . . I had: Leave me alone for a while. I ache all over because of the running back and forth I've been doing.



Nurse. Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile?
Do you not see that I am out of breath?

Juliet. How art thou out of breath when thou hast
breath

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

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

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

Nurse. Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.
My back o' t' other side—ah, my back, my back!
Beshrew your heart for sending me about
55 To catch my death with jauncing up and down!

Juliet. I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my
love?

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

Juliet. Where is my mother? Why, she is within.
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!
“Your love says, like an honest gentleman,
65 ‘Where is your mother?’”

Nurse. O God's Lady dear!
Are you so hot? Marry come up, I trow.
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
Hence forward do your messages yourself.

70 **Juliet.** Here's such a coil! Come, what says Romeo?

Nurse. Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

39–40 Say . . . bad: Tell me if the news is good or bad, and I'll wait for the details.

41 simple: foolish.

54–55 Beshrew . . . down: Curse you for making me endanger my health by running around. Considering the Nurse's feelings for Juliet, is this really an angry curse?

66–69 O God's . . . yourself: Are you so eager? Control yourself (come up). Is this the treatment I get for my pain? From now on, run your own errands.

70 coil: fuss.



Juliet. I have.

Nurse. Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell;

There stays a husband to make you a wife.

75 Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks:

They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.

Hie you to church; I must another way,

To fetch a ladder, by the which your love

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

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

But you shall bear the burden soon at night.

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

Juliet. Hie to high fortune! Honest nurse, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

73–74 Then hie . . . a wife: Then go quickly to Friar Laurence's cell, where Romeo wants to marry you.

77–79 The Nurse will get the ladder that Romeo will use to climb to Juliet's room after they are married.



SCENE 6 *Friar Laurence's cell.*

Friar Laurence cautions Romeo to be more sensible in his love for Juliet. When she arrives, the two confess their love to each other and prepare to be married by Friar Laurence.

[*Enter Friar Laurence and Romeo.*]

Friar Laurence. So smile the heavens upon this holy act

That after-hours with sorrow chide us not!

Romeo. Amen, amen! But come what sorrow can,

It cannot countervail the exchange of joy

5 That one short minute gives me in her sight.

Do thou but close our hands with holy words,

Then love-devouring death do what he dare—

It is enough I may but call her mine.

Friar Laurence. These violent delights have violent

10 ends

And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,

Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey

Is loathsome in his own deliciousness

And in the taste confounds the appetite.

15 Therefore love moderately: long love doth so;

Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

[*Enter Juliet.*]

1–2 So smile . . . us not: May heaven bless this act and not blame us for it in the future (**after-hours**).

3–8 come what . . . mine: No future sorrow can outweigh (**countervail**) the joy Juliet brings me. Once we're married don't even care if I die.

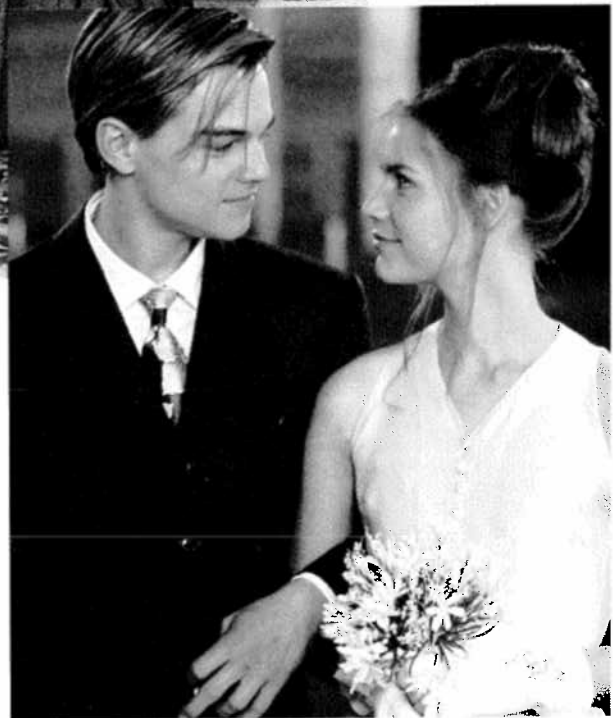
9–16 These . . . slow: The Friar compares Romeo's passion to gunpowder and the fire that ignites it: both are destroyed; then to honey, whose sweetness can destroy the appetite. He reminds Romeo to practice moderation in love. How likely is it that Romeo will follow this advice?

VIEW AND COMPARE



(Zeffirelli, 1968)

What view of marriage is reflected in each of these images?



(Luhmann, 1996)



Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.

20 A lover may bestride the gossamer
That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

Juliet. Good even to my ghostly confessor.

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

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

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

Juliet. Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament.

35 They are but beggars that can count their worth;
But my true love is grown to such excess
I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

Friar Laurence. Come, come with me, and we will
make short work;

40 For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.

[*Exeunt.*]

19–21 A lover . . . vanity: A lover can walk across a spider's web (**gossamer**), almost like walking on air.

22 ghostly confessor: spiritual advisor

25 As much to him: The same greeting to Romeo that he offers to me.

26–31 If you are as happy as I am and have more skill to proclaim it, then sweeten the air by singing of our happiness to the world.

32–33 Conceit . . . ornament: True understanding (**conceit**) needs no word

39–40 you shall . . . one: Until I have performed the wedding ceremony, I will not allow you to be alone together.