ROMEO enters alone.

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

ROMEO moves away. BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO enter.

BENVOLIO
Romeo, my cousin Romeo! Romeo!

MERCUTIO
He is wise,
And, on my life, hath stoln him home to bed.

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

MERCUTIO
Nay, I'll conjure too!
Romeo! Humours, madman, passion, lover!
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh!
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied.

BENVOLIO
If he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

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
Is fair and honest. In his mistress' name
I conjure only but to raise up him.

BENVOLIO
Come on. He's hidden behind these trees to keep the night company. His love is blind, so it belongs in the dark.
If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar tree
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.—
O Romeo, that she were! Oh, that she were
An open arse, and thou a poperin pear.
Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed.
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.—
Come, shall we go?

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

If love is blind, it can't hit the target. Now he'll sit under a medlar tree and wish his mistress were one of those fruits that look like female genitalia. Oh Romeo, I wish she were an open-arise, and you a Popperin pear to “pop her in.” Good night, Romeo. I'll go to my little trundle bed. This open field is too cold a place for me to sleep. (to BENVOLIO) Come on, should we go?

Let's go. There's no point in looking for him if he doesn't want to be found.

Exit.
Scene 3

**ORIGINAL TEXT**

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

Enter FRIAR LAWRENCE, with a basket.

The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
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-juicèd flowers.
The earth, that’s nature’s mother, is her tomb.
What is her burying, grave that is her womb.
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find,
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some and yet all different.

Oh, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities.
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give.
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 by action dignified.

Within the infant rind of this small flower
Poison hath residence and medicine power.
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;
Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.
Two such opposèd kings encamp them still,
In man as well as herbs—grace and rude will.

And where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

**ROMEO**

Good morrow, Father.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

Benedicite.

What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?
Young son, it argues a 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

**MODERN TEXT**

**FRIAR LAWRENCE** enters by himself, carrying a basket.

The smiling morning is replacing the frowning night. Darkness is stumbling out of the sun’s path like a drunk man. Now, before the sun comes up and burns away the dew, I have to fill this basket of mine with poisonous weeds and medicinal flowers. The Earth is nature's mother and also nature's tomb. Plants are born out of the Earth, and they are buried in the Earth when they die. From the Earth's womb, many different sorts of plants and animals come forth, and the Earth provides her children with many excellent forms of nourishment.

Everything nature creates has some special property, and each one is different. Herbs, plants, and stones possess great power.

There is nothing on Earth that is so evil that it does not provide the earth with some special quality. And there is nothing that does not turn bad if it's put to the wrong use and abused.

Virtue turns to vice if it’s misused. Vice sometimes becomes virtue through the right activity.

**ROMEO enters.**

Inside the little rind of this weak flower, there is both poison and powerful medicine. If you smell it, you feel good all over your body. But if you taste it, you die. There are two opposite elements in everything, in men as well as in herbs—good and evil.

**ROMEO**

Good morning, father.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**

God bless you. Who greets me so early in the morning? Young man, something's wrong if you're getting out of bed this early. Everyone old man has worries, and worried men never get any sleep, but young men shouldn’t have a care in the world. They should get to bed early and get plenty of sleep. Therefore, the fact that you’re awake this early tells me you’ve been upset with some anxiety. If that’s not the case, then this must be the
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
Thou art uproused by some distemperature.
Or if not so, then here I hit it right:
Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.

ROMEO
That last is true. The sweeter rest was mine.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?

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

FRIAR LAWRENCE
That’s my good son. But where hast thou been, then?

ROMEO
I’ll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.
I have been feasting with mine enemy,
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me,
That’s by me wounded. Both our remedies
Within thy help and holy physic lies.
I bear no hatred, blessèd man, for, lo,
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

ROMEO
Then plainly know my heart’s dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,
And all 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.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? Young men’s love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine
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,
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears.
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit

FRIAR LAWRENCE
May God forgive you if you’ve sinned!—Were you with Rosaline?

ROMEO
With Rosaline, father? No, I have forgotten that girl and all the sadness she brought me.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
That’s good, my boy. But where have you been?

ROMEO
I’ll tell you before you have to ask me again. I have been feasting with my enemy. Suddenly someone wounded me with love and was wounded with love by me. You have the sacred power to cure both of us. I carry no hatred, holy man, because my request will benefit my enemy.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
Holy Saint Francis, this is a drastic change! Have you given up so quickly on Rosaline, whom you loved so much? Then young men love with their eyes, not with their hearts. Jesus and Mary, how many tears did you cry for Rosaline? How many salty tear-drops did you waste salting a love you never tasted? The sun hasn’t yet melted away the fog you made with all your sighs. The groans you used to make are still ringing in my old ears. There’s still a stain on your cheek from an old tear that hasn’t been washed off yet. If you were ever yourself, and this sadness was yours, you and your sadness were all for Rosaline. And now you’ve changed? Then repeat this after me: you can’t
Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.
If e'er thou wast thyself and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.
And art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence then:
Women may fall when there's no strength in men.

**ROMEO**
Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

**ROMEO**
And badest me bury love.

expect women to be faithful when men are so unreliable.

**ROMEO**
You scolded me often for loving Rosaline.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
I scolded you for obsessing about her, not for loving her, my student.

**ROMEO**
And you told me to bury my love.
Scene 2

ROMEO
He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

JULIET appears in a window above

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,
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!

It is my lady. Oh, it is my love.
Oh, 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.

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
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.
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand.
Oh, that I were a glove upon that hand
That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET
Ay me!

ROMEO
(advising) She speaks.
O, speak again, bright angel! For thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
As is a wingèd messenger of heaven
Unto the white, upturnèd, wondering 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.

JULIET
O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name.

ROMEO
It's easy for someone to joke about scars if they've never been cut.

JULIET enters on the balcony.

But wait, what's that light in the window over there? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Rise up, beautiful sun, and kill the jealous moon. The moon is already sick and pale with grief because you, Juliet, her maid, are more beautiful than she. Don't be her maid, because she is jealous. Virginity makes her look sick and green. Only fools hold on to their virginity. Let it go. Oh, there's my lady! Oh, it is my love. Oh, I wish she knew how much I love her. She's talking, but she's not saying anything. So what? Her eyes are saying something. I will answer them. I am too bold. She's not talking to me. Two of the brightest stars in the whole sky had to go away on business, and they're asking her eyes to twinkle in their places until they return. What if her eyes were in the sky and the stars were in her head?—The brightness of her cheeks would outshine the stars the way the sun outshines a lamp. If her eyes were in the night sky, they would shine so brightly through space that birds would start singing, thinking her light was the light of day. Look how she leans her cheek on her hand. Oh, I wish I was the glove on that hand so that I could touch that cheek.

JULIET
Oh, my!

ROMEO
(to himself) She speaks. Oh, speak again, bright angel. You are as glorious as an angel tonight. You shine above me, like a winged messenger from heaven who makes mortal men fall on their backs to look up at the sky, watching the angel walking on the clouds and sailing on the air.

JULIET
(not knowing ROMEO hears her) Oh, Romeo, Romeo, why do you have to be Romeo? Forget about your father and change your name. Or else, if you won't change your name, just swear
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

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

**JULIET**
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy. Thou art thyself, though not a Montague. 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. So Romeon would, were he not Romeo called, Retain that dear perfection which he owes 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. 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 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 not yet drunk a hundred words Of that tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound. Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

**ROMEO**
Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

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

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

**JULIET**
If they do see thee they will murder thee.
Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords. Look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

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

By whose direction found’st thou out this place?

By love, that first did prompt me to inquire.
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.

Thou know’st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.
Fain would I dwell on form. Fain, fain deny
What I have spoke. But farewell compliment!

Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “ay,”
And I will take thy word. Yet if thou swear’st
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers’ perjuries,
They say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

Or if thou think’st I am too quickly won,
I’ll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo. But else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my behavior light.

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

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

Lady, I swear by the sacred moon above, the moon that paints
the tops of fruit trees with silver—
O, swear not by the moon, th’ inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circle orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO
What shall I swear by?

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

ROMEO
If my heart’s dear love—

JULIET
What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

ROMEO
Th’ exchange of thy love’s faithful vow for mine.

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

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

JULIET
But to be frank, and give it thee again. And yet I wish but for the thing I have. My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep. The more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

NURSE calls from within

I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu.—
Anon, good Nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little. I will come again.

Exit JULIET, above

ROMEO
O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,
Don’t swear by the moon. The moon is always changing. Every month its position in the sky shifts. I don’t want you to turn out to be that inconsistent too.

ROMEO
What should I swear by?

JULIET
Do not swear at all. But if you have to swear, swear by your wonderful self, which is the god I worship like an idol, and then I’ll believe you.

ROMEO
If my heart’s dear love—

JULIET
Well, don’t swear. Although you bring me joy, I can’t take joy in this exchange of promises tonight. It’s too crazy. We haven’t done enough thinking. It’s too sudden. It’s too much like lightning, which flashes and then disappears before you can say, “it’s lightning.” My sweet, good night. Our love, which right now is like a flower bud in the summer air, may turn out to be a beautiful flower by the next time we meet. I hope you enjoy the same sweet peace and rest I feel in my heart.

ROMEO
Oh, are you going to leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET
What satisfaction could you possibly have tonight?

ROMEO
I would be satisfied if we made each other true promises of love.

JULIET
I pledged my love to you before you asked me to. Yet I wish I could take that promise back, so I had it to give again.

ROMEO
You would take it back? Why would you do that, my love?

JULIET
Only to be generous and give it to you once more. But I’m wishing for something I already have. My generosity to you is as limitless as the sea, and my love is as deep. The more love I give you, the more I have. Both loves are infinite.

The NURSE calls from offstage.

I hear a noise inside. Dear love, goodbye—Just a minute, good Nurse. Sweet Montague, be true. Stay here for a moment. I’ll come back.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO
Oh, blessed, blessed night! Because it’s dark out, I’m afraid all
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering sweet to be substantial.

Enter JULIET, above

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

By one that I'll procure to come to thee
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

NURSE
(from within) Madam!

JULIET
I come, anon.—But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee—

NURSE
(from within) Madam!

ORIGINAL TEXT

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

Tomorrow will I send.

ROMEO
So thrive my soul—

A thousand times good night!

Exit JULIET, above

ROMEO
A thousand times the worse to want thy light.

A lover goes toward his beloved as enthusiastically as a schoolboy leaving his books, but when he leaves his girlfriend, he feels as miserable as the schoolboy on his way to school.

Moves to exit Reenter JULIET, above

JULIET
Hist! Romeo, hist!—Oh, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
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!”

ROMEO
It is my soul that calls upon my name.

How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET
170 Romeo!

ROMEO
this is just a dream, too sweet to be real.

JULIET enters on her balcony.

JULIET
Three words, dear Romeo, and then it's good night for real. If your intentions as a lover are truly honorable and you want to marry me, send me word tomorrow. I'll send a messenger to you, and you can pass on a message telling me where and when we'll be married. I'll lay all my fortunes at your feet and follow you, my lord, all over the world.

NURSE
(offstage) Madam!

JULIET
(to the NURSE) I'll be right there! (to ROMEO) But if you don't have honorable intentions, I beg you—

NURSE
(offstage) Madam!

ORIGINAL TEXT

JULIET
Alright, I'm coming!—I beg you to stop trying for me and leave me to my sadness. Tomorrow I'll send the messenger.

ROMEO
My soul depends on it—

JULIET
A thousand times good night.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO
Leaving you is a thousand times worse than being near you. A lover goes toward his beloved as enthusiastically as a schoolboy leaving his books, but when he leaves his girlfriend, he feels as miserable as the schoolboy on his way to school.

ROMEO starts to leave. JULIET returns, on her balcony.

JULIET
Hist, Romeo! Hist! Oh, I wish I could make a falconer's call, so I could bring my little falcon back again. I'm trapped in my family's house, so I must be quiet. Otherwise I would rip open the cave where Echo sleeps. I would make her repeat his name until her voice grew more hoarse than mine by repeating, “My Romeo!”

ROMEO
My soul is calling out my name. The sound of lovers calling each others names through the night is silver-sweet. It's the sweetest sound a lover ever hears.

JULIET
Romeo!

ROMEO
My nyas?

**JULIET**
What o'clock tomorrow
Shall I send to thee?

**ROMEO**
By the hour of nine.

**JULIET**
I will not fail. 'Tis twenty year 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,
Remembering how I love thy company.

**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.

**ROMEO**
I would I were thy bird.

**JULIET**
Sweet, so would I.

Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

**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 friar's close cell,
His help to crave and my dear hap to tell.

---

My baby hawk?

**JULIET**
What time tomorrow should I send a messenger to you?

**ROMEO**
By nine o'clock.

**JULIET**
I won't fail. From now until then seems like twenty years. I have forgotten why I called you back.

**ROMEO**
Let me stand here until you remember your reason.

**JULIET**
I'll forget it, and you'll have to stand there forever. I'll only remember how much I love your company.

**ROMEO**
I'll keep standing here, even if you keep forgetting. I'll forget that I have any home besides this spot right here.

**JULIET**
It's almost morning. I want to make you go, but I'd only let you go as far as a spoiled child lets his pet bird go. He lets the bird hop a little from his hand and then yanks him back by a string.

**ROMEO**
I wish I was your bird.

**JULIET**
My sweet, so do I. But I would kill you by petting you too much. Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow that I'll say good night until tonight becomes tomorrow.

**JULIET**
Exits.

**ROMEO**
I hope you sleep peacefully. I wish I were Sleep and Peace, so I could spend the night with you. Now I'll go see my priest, to ask for his help and tell him about my good luck.

**JULIET**
He exits.
Scene 4

**Original Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> Where the devil should this Romeo be? Came he not home tonight?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Not to his father's. I spoke with his man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> Why, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline, Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet, Hath sent a letter to his father's house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> A challenge, on my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Romeo will answer it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> Any man that can write may answer a letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares, being dared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> Alas, poor Romeo! He is already dead, stabbed with a white wench's black eye, shot through the ear with a love song, the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt shaft. And is he a man to encounter Tybalt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Why, what is Tybalt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> More than Prince of Cats. Oh, he's the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion. He rests his minim rests—one, two, and the third in your bosom. The very butcher of a silk button, a duelist, a duelist, a gentleman of the very first house of the first and second cause. Ah, the immortal passado, the punto reverso, the hai!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Modern Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO enter.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> Where the devil can Romeo be? Didn't he come home last night?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Not to his father's house. I asked a servant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> That fair-skinned, hard-hearted hussy, Rosaline is going to torment him until he goes insane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Tybalt, old Capulet's nephew, has sent a letter to Romeo's father's house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> I bet it's a challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Romeo will answer the challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> Any man who knows how to write can answer a letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> No, Romeo will respond to the letter's writer, telling him whether he accepts the challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> Oh, poor Romeo! He's already dead. He's been stabbed by a white girl's black eye. He's been cut through the ear with a love song. The center of his heart has been split by blind Cupid's arrow. Is he man enough at this point to face off with Tybalt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENVOLIO</strong> Why, what's Tybalt's story?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> He's tougher than the Prince of Cats. He does everything by the book. He fights like you sing at a recital, paying attention to time, distance, and proportion. He takes the proper breaks: one, two, and the third in your heart. He's the butcher who can hit any silk button. A master of duels. He's a gentleman from the finest school of fencing. He knows how to turn any argument into a swordfight. He knows passado—the forward thrust—the punto reverso—the backhand thrust—and the hai—the thrust that goes straight through.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The what?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCUTIO</strong> The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting fantasmines, these new tuners of accents! &quot;By Jesu, a very good blade! A very tall man! A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
very good whore!” Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these “pardon me’s,” who stand so much on the new form, that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? Oh, their bones, their bones!

BENVOLIO
Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

MERCUTIO
Without his roe, like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in. Laura to his lady was but a kitchen-wench— marry, she had a better love to berhyme her—Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots, Thisbe a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose.— Signior Romeo, bonjour! 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 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 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.
Why, then is my pump well flowered.

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

**ROméo**
O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness.

**MERCUpio**
Come between us, good Benvolio. My wits faints.

**ROméo**
Switch and spurs, switch and spurs, or I'll cry a match.

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

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

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

**ROméo**
Nay, good goose, bite not.

**MERCUpio**
Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting. It is a most sharp sauce.

**ROméo**
And is it not well served into a sweet goose?

**MERCUpio**
Oh, here's a wit of cheveril, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

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

**MERCUpio**
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 driveling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

**BEnvolo**
Stop there, stop there.

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

**BEnvolo**
Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

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

Well, then my pump is well decorated with flowers.

**MERCUpio**
Alright my witty friend, this joke has worn out your pump. Its thin skin is all worn out. The joke is all you have left.

**ROméo**
This is a bad joke. It's all silliness.

**MERCUpio**
Come break this up, Benvolio. I'm losing this duel of wits.

**ROméo**
Keep going, keep going, or I'll declare myself the winner.

**MERCUpio**
Now, if our jokes go on a wild-goose chase, I'm finished. You have more wild goose in one of your jokes than I have in five of mine. Was I even close to you in the chase for the goose?

**ROméo**
You were never with me for anything if you weren't there for the goose.

**MERCUpio**
I'll bite you on the ear for that joke.

**ROméo**
No, good goose, don't bite me.

**MERCUpio**
Your joke is a very bitter apple. Your humor is a spicy sauce.

**ROméo**
Then isn't it just the right dish for a sweet goose?

**MERCUpio**
Oh, that's a joke made out of leather that spreads itself thin, from the width of an inch to as fat as a yard.

**ROméo**
I stretch my joke for that word “fat.” If you add that word to the word “goose,” it shows that you are a fat goose.

**MERCUpio**
Why, isn't all this joking better than groaning about love? Now you're sociable. Now you're Romeo. Now you are what you've learned to be and what you are naturally. This love of yours was like a blithering idiot who runs up and down looking for a hole to hide his toy in.

**BEnvolo**
Stop there, stop there.

**MERCUpio**
You want me to stop my tale before I'm done.

**BEnvolo**
Otherwise your tale would have gotten too long.

**MERCUpio**
Oh, you're wrong. I would have made it short. I had come to the deepest part of my tale, and I planned to say nothing more on the topic.
Enter 

**NURSE** and her man **PETER**

**ROMEO**
Here's goodly gear.

**BENVOLIO**
A sail, a sail!

**MERCUTIO**
Two, two—a shirt and a smock.

**NURSE**
Peter!

**ROMEO**
Here's something good.

**BENVOLIO**
A sail, a sail!

**MERCUTIO**
There's two—a man and a woman.

**NURSE**
Peter!

The **NURSE** enters with her servant, **PETER**.

**PETER**
Anon!

**NURSE**
My fan, Peter.

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

**NURSE**
God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

**MERCUTIO**
God ye good e'en, fair gentlewoman.

**NURSE**
Is it good e'en?

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

**NURSE**
Out upon you! What a man are you?

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

**NURSE**
By my troth, it is well said. “For himself to mar,” quoth he? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?

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

**NURSE**
You say well.

**MERCUTIO**
Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, i’ faith, wisely, wisely.

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

**BENVOLIO**

**ROMEO**
Here's something good.

**BENVOLIO**
A sail, a sail!

**MERCUTIO**
There's two—a man and a woman.

**NURSE**
Peter!

**ROMEO**
I can tell you, but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you started looking for him. I am the youngest man by that name, because there is no one younger, or worse.

**NURSE**
You speak well.

**MERCUTIO**
Is the worst well? Very well taken, I believe, very wise.

**NURSE**
(to **ROMEO**) If you're the Romeo I'm looking for, sir, I would like to have a confidence with you.

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

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

**ROMEO**
What hast thou found?

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

\[\text{(sings)}\]
\begin{align*}
\text{An old hare hoar,} \\
\text{And an old hare hoar,} \\
\text{Is very good meat in Lent.} \\
\text{But a hare that is hoar} \\
\text{Is too much for a score} \\
\text{When it hoars ere it be spent.}
\end{align*}

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

**ROMEO**
I will follow you.

**MERCUTIO**
Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, lady, lady, lady.

\textit{Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO}

**NURSE**
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.

**NURSE**
An he speak any thing against me, I'll take him down, an he were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks. And if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scullery knave! I am none of his flirt-gills. I am none of his skains-mates. (to PETER) And thou must stand by, too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

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

**NURSE**
Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me quivers. Scullery knave! (to ROMEO) Pray you, sir, a word. And as I told you, my young lady bid me inquire you out. What she bade 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.

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

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

ROMEO
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 some means to come to shrift this afternoon.

NURSE
(gives her coins) Here is for thy pains.

ROMEO
(takes the money) This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

NURSE
No, truly, sir. Not a penny.

ROMEO
Go to. I say you shall.

NURSE
(taking the money) This afternoon, sir? She'll 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 top-gallant of my joy must be my convoy in the secret night. Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains. Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

NURSE
May God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

ROMEO
What sayst thou, my dear Nurse?

NURSE
Is your man secret? Did you ne’er hear say, “Two may keep counsel, putting one away”?

ROMEO
Warrant thee, my man’s as true as steel.

NURSE
Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady.—Lord, Lord! when ’twas a little prating thing.—Oh, there is a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard, but she, good soul, had as woman and very poor behavior.

NURSE
You have a good heart, and believe me, I’ll tell her that. Lord, Lord, she’ll be a happy woman.

ROMEO
What are you going to tell her, Nurse? You’re not paying attention to me.

NURSE
Sir, I’ll tell her that you protest to her, which I think is the gentlemanly thing to do.

ROMEO
Tell her to devise a plan to get out of her house and come to confession at the abbey this afternoon. At Friar Lawrence’s cell she can make confession and be married. (giving her coins) Here is a reward for your efforts.

NURSE
No, really, I won’t take a penny.

ROMEO
Go on, I insist you take it.

NURSE
(taking the money) This afternoon, sir? She'll be there.

ROMEO
Wait good Nurse. Within an hour, one of my men will come to you behind the abbey wall and give you a rope ladder. I’ll use the rope ladder to climb over the walls at night. Then I’ll meet Juliet joyfully and in secret. Goodbye. Be honest and helpful, and I’ll repay you for your efforts. Goodbye. Sing my praises to your mistress.

NURSE
What do you have to say, my dear Nurse?

NURSE
Can your man keep a secret? Haven’t you ever heard the saying, “Two can conspire to put one away”?

ROMEO
I assure you, my man is as true as steel.

NURSE
Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord, when she was a little baby—Oh, there is one nobleman in the city, a guy named Paris, who would be happy to claim her as his own.
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 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, 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.—Peter!

**PETER**
Anon!

**NURSE**
Before and apace.

Juliet would rather look at a toad than at him. I make her angry sometimes by saying that Paris is more handsome than you are. But when I say so, I swear she turns white as a sheet. Don't “rosemary” and “Romeo” begin with the same letter?

**ROMEO**
Yes, Nurse, what about that? They both begin with the letter “R.”

**NURSE**
Ah, you jokester—that's the dog's name. “R” is for the—no, I know it begins with another letter. She says the most beautiful things about you and rosemary. It would be good for you to hear the things she says.

**ROMEO**
Give my compliments to your lady.

**NURSE**
Yes, a thousand times. Peter!

**PETER**
I'm ready.

**NURSE**
(giving PETER her fan) Go ahead. Go quickly.

_Exeunt_ They all exit.
Scene 5

ORIGINAL TEXT

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.
Oh, she is lame! Love’s heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glide than the sun’s beams,
Driving back shadows over louring hills.
Therefore do nimble-pinioned doves draw love
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
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,
And his to me.
But old folks, many feign as they were dead,
Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

Enter JULIET

JULIET enters.

JULIET
I sent the Nurse at nine o’clock. Maybe she can’t find him. That
can’t be. Oh, she’s slow! Love’s messengers should be thoughts,
which fly ten times faster than sunbeams. They should be
strong enough to push shadows over the dark hills. That’s the
way doves carry Venus so fast, and that’s why Cupid has wings
that let him fly as fast as the wind. Now it’s noon. That’s three
hours since nine o’clock, but she hasn’t come back. If she was
young and passionate, she’d move as fast as a ball. My words
would bounce her to my sweet love, and his words would
bounce her back to me. But a lot of old people act like they’re
already dead—sluggish, slow, fat, and colorless, like lead.

Enter NURSE and PETER

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

NURSE
Peter, stay at the gate.

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

NURSE
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
To say to me that thou art out of breath?
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay

ORIGINAL TEXT

NURSE
I am aweary. Give me leave awhile.
Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt have I!

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

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

JULIET
How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath
To say to me that thou art out of breath?
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay

MODERN TEXT

JULIET
Enter JULIET

JULIET enters.

JULIET
I sent the Nurse at nine o’clock. Maybe she can’t find him. That
can’t be. Oh, she’s slow! Love’s messengers should be thoughts,
which fly ten times faster than sunbeams. They should be
strong enough to push shadows over the dark hills. That’s the
way doves carry Venus so fast, and that’s why Cupid has wings
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hours since nine o’clock, but she hasn’t come back. If she was
young and passionate, she’d move as fast as a ball. My words
would bounce her to my sweet love, and his words would
bounce her back to me. But a lot of old people act like they’re
already dead—sluggish, slow, fat, and colorless, like lead.

The NURSE and PETER enter.

NURSE
Oh my God, here she comes! Oh sweet Nurse, what news do
you bring? Have you spoken to him? Send your man away.

NURSE
Peter, wait for me at the gate.

JULIET
Now, good sweet Nurse—Oh Lord, why do you look so sad?
Even if the news is sad, tell me with a smile on your face. If the
news is good, you’re ruining the sweet news by playing a trick
with a sour face like that.

NURSE
I am tired. Leave me alone for a minute. Oh my, my bones ache
so much. I’ve been running all over the place.

JULIET
I wish you had my bones, and I had your news. Come on now, I
beg you, speak, good Nurse, speak.

NURSE
Sweet Jesus, you’re in such a hurry! Can’t you wait for a
moment? Don’t you see that I’m out of breath?

JULIET
How can you be out of breath when you have enough breath to
tell me that you’re out of breath? The excuse you make to delay
the news is longer than the news itself. Is the news good or
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.

35 Is thy news good, or bad? Answer to that.
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.
Let me be satisfied. Is 't good or bad?

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

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

40 What says he of our marriage? What of that?

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

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

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

JULIET
Where is my mother? Why, she is within.
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!
"Your love says, like an honest gentleman, 'Where is your mother?'"

NURSE
O God's lady dear,
Are you so hot? Marry, come up, I trow.
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

JULIET
Here's such a coil. Come, what says Romeo?

NURSE
Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

JULIET
I have.

NURSE
Then hie you hence to Friar Lawrence's cell.
There stays a husband to make you a wife.
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.
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.

---

the blood rushing to your cheeks. You blush bright red as soon as you hear any news. Go to the church. I must go by a different path to get a rope ladder. Your love will use it to climb up to your window while it's dark. I do the drudge work for your pleasure. But soon you'll be doing a wife's work all night long. Go. I'll go to lunch. You go to Friar Lawrence's cell.

**JULIET**

Wish me luck. Thank you, dear Nurse.

*Exeunt*

*They exit.*
Scene 6

**ORIGINAL TEXT**

Enter **FRIAR LAWRENCE** and **ROMEO**

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

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

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
These violent delights have violent ends
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so.

**JULIET**
Good even to my ghostly confessor.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

**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
Unfold the imagined happiness that both
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

**JULIET**
I can imagine more than I can say—I have more on my mind than words. Anyone who can count how much he has is poor.

**MODERN TEXT**

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
May the heavens be happy with this holy act of marriage, so nothing unfortunate happens later to make us regret it.

**ROMEO**
Amen, amen. But whatever misfortunes occur, they can’t ruin the joy I feel with one look at her. All you have to do is join our hands with holy words, then love-destroying death can do whatever it pleases. It’s enough for me if I can call her mine.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
These sudden joys have sudden endings. They burn up in victory like fire and gunpowder. When they meet, as in a kiss, they explode. Too much honey is delicious, but it makes you sick to your stomach. Therefore, love each other in moderation. That is the key to long-lasting love. Too fast is as bad as too slow.

**JULIET enters in a rush and embraces ROMEO**

**JULIET**
Here comes the lady. Oh,a footstep as light as hers will never endure the rocky road of life. Lovers are so light they can walk on a spiderweb floating on a summer breeze, and yet not fall. That’s how flimsy and unreal pleasure is.

**JULIET**
Good evening, my spiritual confessor.

**FRIAR LAWRENCE**
Romeo will thank you, my girl, for both of us.

**JULIET**
I'll give him equal thanks, so we're even.

**ROMEO**
Ah, Juliet if you're as happy as I am, and you're better with words, tell me about the happiness you imagine we'll have in our marriage.
FRIAR LAWRENCE

35 Come, come with me, and we will make short work.
   For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
   Till holy church incorporate two in one.

   Exeunt

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Come, come with me, and we'll do the job quickly. Because if you don't mind, I'm not leaving you two alone until you're united in marriage.

They exit.