



The Tragedy of

ROMEO

AND

JULIET



ACT 2



0 SD. **Chorus:** Again the Chorus's speech is in the form of a sonnet.

2. **gapes:** desires eagerly
3. **fair:** i.e., fair one (Rosaline)
4. **matched:** compared
5. **again:** in return
6. **Alike bewitched:** just as **bewitched** as Juliet is
7. **complain:** plead for favor
8. **fearful:** frightening
9. **held:** considered; **access:** i.e., **access** to Juliet
10. **use:** are accustomed
13. **time means: time (tends them) means**
14. **Temp'ring . . . sweet:** mixing great difficulties (**extremities**) with great pleasure (**extreme sweet**)

2.1 Romeo finds himself so in love with Juliet that he cannot leave her. He scales a wall and enters Capulet's garden. Meanwhile Benvolio and Mercutio look for him in vain.

2. **earth:** body (which is **dull** [i.e., slow] because it is moving away from what attracts it, its **center**)

ACT 2

[Enter¹ 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 Juliet¹ matched,¹ 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
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.

10

But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.
[Chorus exits.]

[Scene 1]

Enter Romeo alone.

ROMEO

Can I go forward when my heart is here?

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

[He withdraws.]

Enter Benvolio with Mercutio.

BENVOLIO

Romeo, my cousin Romeo, Romeo!

MERCUTIO He is wise

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

BENVOLIO

He ran this way and leapt this orchard wall.

Call, good Mercutio.

[MERCUTIO¹

Nay, I'll conjure too.

Romeo! Humors! Madman! Passion! Lover!

Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh.

Speak but one rhyme and I am satisfied.

Cry but "Ay me," [pronounce¹ but "love" and
[¹dove.]

Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,

One nickname for her purblind son and [heir,¹Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so [trim¹

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,

By her high forehead, and her scarlet lip,

By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,

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.

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.

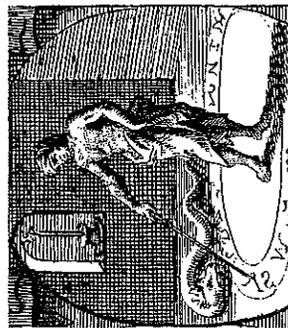
That were some spite. My invocation

Is fair and honest. In his mistress' name,

I conjure only but to raise up him.

BENVOLIO

Come, he hath hid himself among these trees

6. **orchard:** garden (See picture, page 72.)8. **conjure:** raise up a spirit by invoking its proper name (In line 9 Mercutio tries out a variety of names for Romeo.)10. **likeness:** form (Sighs and rhyming were traditionally associated with lovers.)14. **gossip:** familiar acquaintance; **fair:** flattering16. **Abraham:** i.e., old (as the biblical **Abraham**) **Cupid,** though **young,** was an ancient god. **trim:** accurately17. **King . . . maid:** alluding to a ballad19. **ape:** fool; **conjure him:** raise his ghost (See picture, below.)23. **demesnes:** regions27. **raise:** conjure up in a magic circle (Mercutio's rather explicit sexual meaning is carried in the words **raise, mistress' circle, stand, and laid.**)30. **were some spite:** would be some injury

A conjurer. (2.1.19)

From Laurentius Wolffgang Woyt,
... *Emblematischer Parnassus* . . . (1728-30).

34. **consorted**: in league; **humorous**: moody

36. **mark**: target

37. **medlar**: a fruit, also called **open-arse** (line 41) See picture, page 96.

41. **pop'rin pear**: a pear from Poperinghe, in Flanders

42. **truckle bed**: i.e., trundle bed

2.2 From Capulet's garden Romeo overhears Juliet express her love for him. When he answers her, they acknowledge their love and their desire to be married.

0 SD. The scene now moves into Capulet's garden. Though the action is continuous, editors mark a new scene because of the change in location.

1 SD. **above**: in the gallery over the stage, as at a window

2-9. **what light . . . wear it**: In this elaborate comparison, Romeo plays first with the idea of **the sun** (Juliet) in a contest with **the moon** (equated with Diana, goddess of the moon). As **the sun** rises, **the moon** begins to look **pale**. The image then shifts toward Diana's role as goddess of chastity. Juliet is **the maid** of Diana as long as Juliet is a virgin. **vestal livery**: clothing worn by Diana's maidens **sick and green**: perhaps a reference to greensickness, a form of anemia thought to afflict girls in puberty, making them pale

To be consorted with the humorous night.
Blind is his love and best befits the dark.

MERCUTIO

If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.
Now will he sit under a medlar tree
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit
As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.—
O Romeo, that she were, O, that she were
An 'open-arse,¹ thou a pop'rin pear.
Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed;
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep.—
Come, shall we go?

BENVOLIO

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

¹They¹ exit.

[Scene 2]

[Romeo comes forward.]

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[Enter Juliet 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.

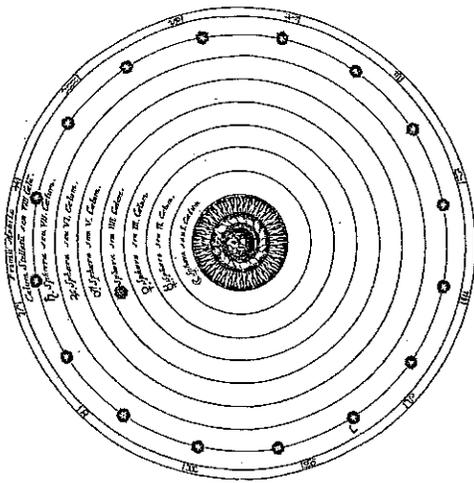
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.

It is my lady. 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.

17. **spheres:** In Ptolemaic astronomy, the heavenly bodies were carried in their orbits around the Earth in crystalline spheres.
 22. **stream:** issue a stream of light
 33. **him:** the messenger of heaven (line 31)
 36. **wherefore:** why
 38. **be but:** only be
 42. **Thou . . . Montague:** i.e., you would still be yourself even if you were not called Montague
 43. **nor . . . nor:** neither . . . nor
 44-45. **O . . . man:** See longer note, page 245.



Ptolemaic universe. (2.2.17)
 From Marcus Manilius, *The sphere of . . .* (1675).

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.
 O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET

Ay me. She speaks.
 ROMEO, [*aside*]

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 wond'ring eyes
 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
 When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

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.

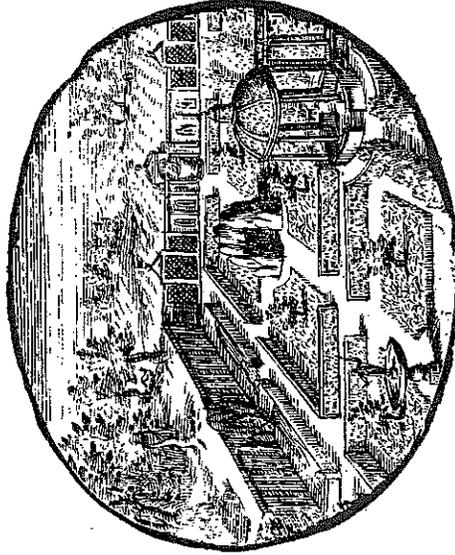
ROMEO, [*aside*]

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at 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. O, be some other name
 Belonging to a man.
 What's in a name? That which we call a rose

49. **owes:** owns
 51. **for thy name:** in return for thy name
 54. **Call me but:** only call me; new baptized:
 given a new Christian name
 56. **bescreened:** i.e., concealed
 57. **counsel:** secrets
 66. **thee dislike:** displeases you
 69. **death:** i.e., mortally dangerous
 71. **o'erperch:** fly over
 73. **And . . . attempt:** love dares to attempt
 whatever it is possible for love to do
 74. **stop:** obstacle



An orchard. (2.1.6)
 From Octavio Boldoni, *Theatrum temporaneum* . . . (1636).

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

ROMEO I take thee at thy word.
 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 yet not drunk a hundred words
 Of thy 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.

ROMEO

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

JULIET

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO

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

JULIET

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO

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 should adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET

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

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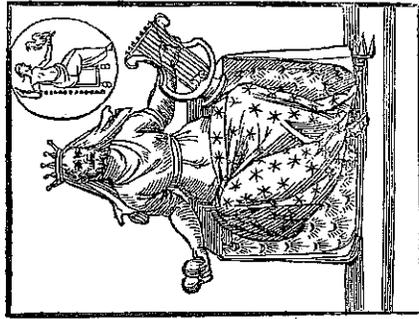
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78. **proof:** invulnerably armed81. **but:** unless83. **prorogued:** deferred; **wanting of:** lacking92. **For that:** because of **that**93. **Fain . . . form:** I would gladly follow the proper formalities94. **compliment:** observance of ceremony97-98. **At lovers' . . . laughs:** a classical commonplace **Jove:** king of the Roman gods (See picture, below.)102. **So:** so that; **else:** otherwise103. **too fond:** too much in love104. **havior light:** behavior immodest105. **true:** faithful, constant

Jove. (2.2.98)

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini . . .* (1615).

106. **coying**: affectation of shyness; **strange**: distant, apparently reluctant
 107. **should**: i, e., would
 110. **light**: unchaste or frivolous
 111. **discovered**: revealed
 115. **orb**: sphere (See note to line 17, above.)
 125. **unadvised**: ill-considered

Than those that have [more] coying to be strange.
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,

But that thou overheard'st ere I was ware
 My true-love passion. Therefore pardon me,
 And not impute this yielding to light love,
 Which the dark night hath so discovered.

110

ROMEO

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

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon,
 That monthly changes in her [circled] orb,
 Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

115

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,

120

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,

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 flower when next we meet.

Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest

Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

130

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

ROMEO

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

136. **would it were:** i.e., wish it were in my possession
 138. **frank:** lavish
 139. **but:** only
 148. **substantial:** real, not dreamed
 150. **thy bent of love:** the intention of your love
 155. **thee my lord:** i.e., you as my lord
 160. **By and by:** immediately
 161. **strife:** striving, efforts

JULIET
 I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,
 And yet I would it were to give again. 135

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. 140
 [*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. [*She exits.*] 145

ROMEO
 O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,
 Being in night, all this is but a dream,
 Too flattering sweet to be substantial.
 [*Reenter 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. 155
 [*Nurse within*] Madam.

JULIET
 I come anon.—But if thou meanest not well,
 I do beseech thee—
 [*Nurse within*] Madam.
 JULIET By and by, I come.—
 To cease thy strife and leave me to my grief.
 Tomorrow will I send.

ROMEO So thrive my soul—
 JULIET A thousand times good night. [She exits.]
 ROMEO A thousand times the worse to want thy light. 165
 Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books,
 But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.
 [Going.]
Enter Juliet [above] again.
 JULIET Hist, Romeo, hist! O, for a falc'ner's voice 170
 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. 175
 How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
 Like softest music to attending ears.
 JULIET Romeo.
 ROMEO My [dear.]
 JULIET Shall I send to thee? What o'clock tomorrow 180
 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. 185
 JULIET I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
 Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

165. **want:** lack
 166. **from:** i.e., go away from
 168. **But . . . school:** i.e., **but love goes away from love as schoolboys go toward school; heavy:** gloomy
 170. **tassel-gentle:** tercel-gentle, a male falcon
 171. **Bondage is hoarse:** i.e., those bound by, for example, their fathers' rules can only hoarsely whisper their desires
 172. **Echo:** Shunned by her lover, Narcissus, the mythological Echo dwindled to a mere voice and lived in caves, condemned to repeat what others spoke.
 177. **attending:** listening (French *attendre*)
 179. **My dear:** For this reading, see longer note, page 246.
 183. **year:** i.e., years

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 his hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silken thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO
I would I were thy bird.

JULIET
Sweet, so would I.
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet
sorrow
That I shall say "Good night" till it be morrow.
[*She exits.*]

[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.

[Scene 3]

Enter Friar Lawrence alone with a basket.

FRIAR LAWRENCE
The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
[*Checking*] 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,

191. a **wanton's**: a spoiled child's
193. **gyves**: leg chains (See picture, below.)

195. **his**: its

196. **would**: wish

201. **morrow**: morning

204. **ghostly**: spiritual; **close**: secluded

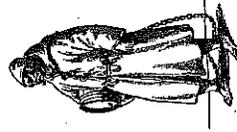
205. **dear**: precious; **hap**: good fortune

2.3 Determined to marry Juliet, Romeo hurries to Friar Lawrence. The Friar agrees to marry them, expressing the hope that the marriage may end the feud between their families.

1-4. **The gray-eyed . . . wheels**: For textual questions associated with these lines, see longer note, page 246.

3. **flecked**: light-spotted

4. **From forth**: away from; **Titan's**: Titan is a poetic name for the sun god, whose chariot is the sun. (See picture, page 86.)



A prisoner in gyves. (2.2.193)

From Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habitii anticit et moderni . . .* (1590).

7. **osier cage:** i.e., basket made of willow twigs
 10. **What . . . womb:** i.e., the **grave** in which she buries her dead is also **her womb**
 11. **divers kind:** various kinds
 13. **virtues:** powers
 14. **None . . . some:** i.e., **none** is totally lacking in some powers (This idea is expanded in lines 17–18 below.)
 15. **mickle:** great; **grace:** capacity to heal
 18. **to the Earth:** i.e., to humankind
 19. **but:** i.e., **but that;** **strained:** perverted
 20. **Revolts . . . birth:** i.e., it **revolts** from its nature
 22. **by action dignified:** i.e., acquires worth through a good action
 24. **medicine power:** healing remedy has **power**
 25–26. **with . . . each part:** i.e., with the sense of small enlivens every **part** of the body
 27. **stays:** stops
 29. **grace:** virtue; **rude will:** violent inclinations, desires
 31. **canker:** cankerworm (See note to **worm** at 1.1.154.)
 33. **Benedicite:** bless you (This five-syllable word is accented on the first, third, and fifth syllables.)
 35. **argues:** indicates; **distempered:** disturbed
 37. **his:** its

- 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;
 10 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.
 15 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;
 Nor aught so good but, strained from that fair use,
 20 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.
 Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
 And vice sometime by action dignified.

Enter Romeo.
 Within the infant rind of this weak flower
 Poison hath residence and medicine power:
 25 For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each
 part,
 Being tasted, stays all senses with the heart.
 Two such opposed kings encamp them still
 In man as well as herbs—grace and rude will;
 And where the worse is predominant,
 30 Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

 ROMEO
 Good morrow, father.
 FRIAR LAWRENCE Benedicite.
 What early tongue so sweet saluted me?
 Young son, it argues a distempered head
 35 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

43. **distemp'rature**: disturbance of the mind
 55. **Both our remedies**: the cure for both of us
 56. **physic**: medicine
 58. **My intercession . . . foe**: my petition is in aid of my enemy (Juliet) as well as of myself
 59. **homely in thy drift**: straightforward in your meaning
 60. **shrifft**: absolution
 64. **save**: except
 67. **pass**: move along



The sun god in his chariot. (2.3.4; 3.2.1-2)
 From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini . . .* (1615).

Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign. 40

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 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? 50

ROMEO
 I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.
 I have been feasting with mine enemy,
 Where on a sudden one hath wounded me
 That's by me wounded. Both our remedies
 Within thy help and holy physic lies.
 I bear no hatred, blessed man, for, lo,
 My intercession likewise steads my foe. 55

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. 60 65

FRIAR LAWRENCE	
Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!	
Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,	70
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 sorrow cheeks for Rosaline!	
How much salt water thrown away in waste	75
To season love, that of it doth not taste!	
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,	
Thy old groans yet ringing in mine ancient ears.	
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit	
Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.	80
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.	85
ROMEO	
Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.	
FRIAR LAWRENCE	
For dotting, not for loving, pupil mine.	
ROMEO	
And bad'st me bury love.	
FRIAR LAWRENCE	Not in a grave
To lay one in, another out to have.	90
ROMEO	
I pray thee, chide me not. Her I love now	
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow.	
The other did not so.	
FRIAR LAWRENCE	O, she knew well
Thy love did read by rote, that could not spell.	95
But come, young waverer, come, go with me.	
In one respect I'll thy assistant be,	
For this alliance may so happy prove	
To turn your households' rancor to pure love.	

73. **deal of brine:** quantity of salt water (tears)
 76. **season:** preserve; flavor
 77. **The . . . clears:** i.e., the clouds of your **sighs** have not yet been dispersed by (this morning's) **sun**
 83. **sentence:** truism, cliché
 85. **may fall:** i.e., **may** be excused for acting immorally (This cliché assumes that men are morally stronger than women.)
 86. **chid'st:** chided, scolded
 88. **bad'st me:** bade me, told me to
 91. **Her I love now:** i.e., she whom **I now love**
 95. **read by rote:** recite from memory; **spell:** i.e., understand the meaning (literally, read letter by letter)
 97. **In one respect:** i.e., because of **one** consideration

ROMEO
O, let us hence. I stand on sudden haste. 100
FRJAR LAWRENCE
Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast.
They exit.

[Scene 4]

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, that
Rosaline,
Torments him so that he will sure run mad. 5
BENVOLIO
Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet,
Hath sent a letter to his father's house.
MERCUTIO A challenge, on my life.
BENVOLIO Romeo will answer it. 10
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,
stabbed with a white wench's black eye, run 15
through the ear with a love-song, the very pin of his
heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt shaft. And
is he a man to encounter Tybalt?
[BENVOLIO] Why, what is Tybalt?
MERCUTIO More than prince of cats. O, he's the coura- 20
geous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing
prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion.

100. **stand on:** i.e., insist on

2.4 Mercutio and Benvolio meet the newly enthusiastic Romeo in the street. Romeo defeats Mercutio in a battle of wits. The Nurse finds Romeo, and he gives her a message for Juliet: meet me at Friar Lawrence's cell this afternoon, and we will there be married.

1. **should:** can
2. **tonight:** last night
3. **his man:** Romeo's servant
8. **his father's:** Romeo's father's
10. **answer it:** accept the challenge
12. **how:** i.e., by saying **how**
16. **pin:** bull's-eye
17. **blind . . . butt shaft:** Cupid's unbarbed arrow
20. **prince of cats:** Tybalt is the name of the Cat in the popular series of stories about Reynard the Fox.
21. **compliments:** i.e., fencing etiquette
22. **prick-song:** a written counterpart to a simple melody

23. **rests:** pauses (in music and fencing); **minim:** a musical note, in ancient music the shortest
25. **first house:** i.e., best fencing school
26. **first . . . cause:** causes demanding satisfaction according to the code of dueling
27. **passado:** a step forward with a thrust; **punto reverso:** backhanded thrust; **hay:** successful thrust (*ai, Italian for "thou hast [it]"*)
29. **The pox of:** i.e., curses on
- 29-30. **affecting phantasies:** pretentious fops
30. **new tuners of accent:** fashionable phrase-makers
31. **tall:** brave
35. **stand . . . on:** insist so much upon; **form:** fashion (but the word also means **bench** [line 36])
39. **Without his roe:** (1) without the first syllable of his name (so that nothing is left of him but a lover's sigh: "O me"); (2) without his "dear" (A roe is a small deer.); (3) sexually spent
41. **numbers:** verses; **Petrarch:** fourteenth-century Italian poet, who wrote sonnets to an idealized lady, **Laura**; **to:** in comparison to
- 43-44. **Dido . . . Cleopatra . . . Helen . . . Hero** . . . **Thisbe:** legendary and fictional romantic heroines (See pictures, pages 94, 100, and 106.)
- hildings:** good-for-nothings
- 46-47. **French slop:** baggy trousers
50. **slip:** wordplay on a slip as a counterfeit coin (line 47); **conceive:** understand
52. **strain:** act in violation of

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 *hay*!

BENVOLIO The what?

MERCUTIO The pox of such antic, lispings, affecting phantasies, these new tuners of accent: "By Jesu, a very good blade! A very tall man! A very good whore!" Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grand-sire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these "don-me"s, who stand so much on the new form that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench? O their bones, their bones!

Enter Romeo.

BENVOLIO Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

MERCUTIO Without his roe, like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in. Laura to his lady was a kitchen wench (marry, she had a better love to berhyme her), Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots, Thisbe a gray 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. 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. 60
 MERCUTIO Right.
 ROMEO Why, then is my pump well flowered.
 MERCUTIO 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, 65
 solely singular.
 ROMEO O single-soled jest, solely singular for the
 singleness.
 MERCUTIO Come between us, good Benvolio. My wits
 faints. 70
 ROMEO Switch and spurs, switch and spurs, or I'll cry
 a match.
 MERCUTIO Nay, if our wits run the wild-goose chase, I
 am done, for thou hast more of the wild goose in
 one of thy wits than, I am sure, I have in my whole 75
 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.
 MERCUTIO I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.
 ROMEO Nay, good goose, bite not. 80
 MERCUTIO Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most
 sharp sauce.
 ROMEO And is it not, then, well served into a sweet
 goose?
 MERCUTIO O, here's a wit of cheveril that stretches 85
 from an inch narrow to an ell broad.
 ROMEO I stretch it out for that word "broad," which
 added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a
 broad goose.
 MERCUTIO Why, is not this better now than groaning 90
 for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou
 Romeo, now art thou what thou art, by art as well as

59. **pink:** (1) perfect example; (2) a flower; (3) a decorative eyelet on a shoe
 62. **pump:** shoe; **flowered:** pinked, decorated
 67-68. **O . . . singleness:** i.e., **O** feeble joke, unique in its weakness **solely singular:** unique (the only sole left)
 71. **Switch and spurs:** Romeo calls on Mercutio to urge on his wit as if it were a horse.
 71-72. **cry a match:** declare myself the winner
 73. **wild-goose chase:** a race in which the rider in the lead chooses the course
 76. **Was . . . goose?:** i.e., have I scored a victory over you by talking of **the goose?**
 78. **for the goose:** as a fool
 81. **sweeting:** a sweet-flavored apple
 85. **cheveril:** kid leather, which **stretches** easily
 86. **ell:** about 45 inches



Dido. (2.4.43)
 From [Guillaume Rouillé,] . . . *Promptuarii iconum* . . . (1553).

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

95

BENVOLIO Stop there, stop there.
MERCUTIO Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.

BENVOLIO Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.
MERCUTIO O, thou art deceived. I would have made it short, for I was come to the whole depth of my tale and meant indeed to occupy the argument no longer.

Enter Nurse and her man [Peter.]

ROMEO Here's goodly gear. A sail, a sail!

MERCUTIO Two, two—a shirt and a smock.

105

NURSE Peter.

PETER Anon.

NURSE My fan, Peter.

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

110

NURSE God you good morrow, gentlemen.

MERCUTIO God you good e'en, fair gentlewoman.

NURSE Is it good e'en?

MERCUTIO 'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of

115

the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

NURSE Out upon you! What a man are you?

ROMEO One, gentlewoman, that God hath made, him-

self 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.

125

94. **natural**: idiot
95. **bauble**: (1) jester's baton; (2) penis (Possible sexual puns continue in lines 95–102 with the words **hole**, **tail**, **hair**, **large**, **short**, **whole**, **depth**, and **occupy**.)

97–98. **against the hair**: i.e., against my wishes

104. **goodly gear**: attractive stuff

105. **a shirt and a smock**: i.e., a man and a woman (A shirt was a man's undergarment, a smock a woman's.)

112. **e'en**: i.e., afternoon

115. **dial**: clock; **prick**: point; penis

116. **Out upon you**: expression of annoyance;

What: what sort of

119. **By my troth**: truly (a mild oath)

125. **fault**: lack



Medlars, or open-arses. (2.1.37, 39, 41)
From *The grete herball* . . . (1529).

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. 130

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. 135
[Singing.]
And an old hare hoar,
Is very good meat in Lent.
But a hare that is hoar
Is too much for a score 140
When it hoars ere it be spent.

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

ROMEO I will follow you.

MERCUTIO Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, lady, lady, lady. 145
[Mercutio and Benvolio] exit.

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. 150

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

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. 160

127. **took**: understood

129. **confidence**: Nurse's mistake for "conference"

131. **indite**: a deliberate "mistake" for "invite"

132. **bawd**: procurer (The word also had the dialect meaning **hare** [line 134].) **So ho**: hunter's cry

134-35. **Lenten pie**: one that should contain no meat

135. **something**: somewhat; **hoar**: musty (with a pun on "whore"); **ere it be spent**: before it's used up

140. **for a score**: i.e., to pay for

141. **hoars**: turns moldy, hoary

147. **saucy merchant**: insolent fellow

148. **ropery**: perhaps, indecent talk; or, perhaps, roguery

151. **stand to**: i.e., defend

152. **An**: if

153. **lustier**: more vigorous

154. **jacks**: rascals

155. **flirt-gills**: flirting women

156. **skains-mates**: meaning unknown

157. **suffer**: allow

NURSE Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave! ¹To Romeo, ¹ Pray you, sir, a word. And, as I told you, my young lady bid me inquire you out. What she bid me say, I will keep to myself. But first let me tell you, if you should lead her in 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. ¹⁷⁵
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. ¹⁸⁰

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,
And there she shall at Friar Lawrence' cell
Be shrived and married. Here is for thy pains. ¹⁸⁵

¹Offering her money.¹

NURSE No, truly, sir, not a penny.

ROMEO Go to, I say you shall.

NURSE

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

ROMEO

And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall. ¹⁹⁰

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

Must be my convoy in the secret night.

Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains. ¹⁹⁵

Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

167. **inquire you out:** find you
169. **in:** i.e., into
174. **weak:** despicable
175. **commend me:** offer my greetings
180. **mark me:** listen to me
184. **shrift:** confession
192. **tackled stair:** rope ladder
193. **topgallant:** summit (literally, the platform atop a mast on a ship)
194. **convoy:** means of conveyance
195. **quit:** reward



Cleopatra. (2.4.43)

From Jacobus de Strada,

Epitome thesauri antiquitatum . . . (1557).

NURSE

Now, 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—O, there is

a 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 any

clout in the versal world. Doth not rosemary and

Romeo begin both with a letter? 210

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. 215

ROMEO Commend me to thy lady.

NURSE Ay, a thousand times.—Peter.

PETER Anon.

NURSE Before and apace.

[*They*] exit.

[Scene 5]

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,

Which ten times faster glides than the sun's beams,

5

200. **counsel:** i.e., a secret.203. **prating:** chattering204-5. **would . . . aboard:** i.e., is eager to claim her205. **had as lief:** i.e., would just as happily209. **clout:** rag; **versal:** i.e., universal210. **a letter:** i.e., the same **letter**212. **that's the dog's name:** because the letter *R* may be sounded as a growl214. **sententious:** the Nurse's mistake for "sentence," i.e., clever saying; **of it:** about it219. **apace:** quickly

2.5 Juliet waits impatiently for the Nurse to return. Her impatience grows when the Nurse, having returned, is slow to deliver Romeo's message. Finally Juliet learns that if she wants to marry Romeo, she need only go to Friar Lawrence's cell that afternoon.

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 Nurse [and Peter.]

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

NURSE Peter, stay at the gate. *[Peter exits.]* 20

JULIET

Now, good sweet nurse—O Lord, why lookest 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. 25

NURSE

I am weary. 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. 30

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 35

6. **louring**: darkly threatening
 7. **Therefore . . . Love**: i.e., this is why Love (i.e., Venus, goddess of love) is often represented in a chariot drawn by quick-winged doves (See picture, below.)

12. **affections**: feelings, emotions

16. **feign as**: act as if

23. **them**: i.e., news (often used in the plural)

26. **Give me leave**: i.e., leave me alone

27. **jaunt**: tiring journey

31. **stay**: wait

35. **in**: i.e., with respect to



Venus and Cupid. (2.5.7-8)

From Joannes ab Indagine, *The book of palmistry* . . . (1666).

38. **stay the circumstance:** wait for the details
 40. **simple:** foolish
 44. **talked on:** talked about
 45. **flower:** best example
 47. **What:** an interjection here introducing a question
 53. **o' t' other:** on the other
 54. **Beshrew:** curse (here, a mild imprecation);
about: hither and thither
 59. **honest:** honorable
 66. **God's lady:** the Virgin Mary
 67. **hot:** impatient; **Marry, come up, I trow:** an expression of irritation



Helen of Troy. (2.4.44)

From [Guillaume Rouillé]... *Promptuarii iconum*... (1553).

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.
 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.
 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 o' 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.

70. **coil:** fuss
 73. **hie you:** hurry
 75. **wanton:** uncontrollable, rebellious
 76. **They'll . . . straight:** i.e., they turn red immediately

79. **climb a bird's nest:** i.e., climb up to your bedroom
 81. **bear the burden:** (1) do your own work; (2) bear the weight of your lover; **soon at night:** i.e., tonight

2.6 Juliet meets Romeo at Friar Lawrence's cell. After expressing their mutual love, they exit with the Friar to be married.

3. **But . . . can:** i.e., no matter what sorrow comes
 4. **countervail:** i.e., outweigh
 6. **Do thou but close:** if you will only join

Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
 Henceforward do your messages yourself.

JULIET Here's such a coil. Come, what says Romeo? 70

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.
They exit.

[Scene 6]

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

5

And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so.
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Enter Juliet.

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

JULIET

Good even to my ghostly confessor.

FRIAR LAWRENCE

Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

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

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

FRIAR LAWRENCE

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

10. **powder**: gunpowder
12. **in his own**: in its own
13. **confounds**: destroys
15. **Too swift**: i.e., that which goes too fast (Pro-
verbial: "The more haste, the worse speed [i.e., suc-
cess].")
18. **gossamers**: cobwebs
19. **idles**: move idly; **wanton**: playful
20. **light**: insubstantial; **vanity**: transitory human
experience
21. **confessor**: accented on the first and third syl-
lables
24. **measure**: quantity
25. **that**: i.e., if; **more**: greater
26. **blazon**: describe; proclaim
28. **Unfold**: reveal
29. **in either**: in each other; **by**: by means of
30. **Conceit**: understanding
31. **Braggs of his**: boasts of its
32. **but**: only; **count**: enumerate
34. **sum up sum**: calculate the total
36. **by your leaves**: i.e., begging your pardons
37. **Till . . . one**: i.e., until I, on behalf of the
Church, make you a married couple