

Scene IV.

A street.

Enter Benvolio and Mercutio.

Mer. Where the devil should this Romeo be?  
Came he not home to-night?

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

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

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

Mer. A challenge, on my life.

Ben. Romeo will answer it.

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

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

Mer. Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! stabb'd 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?

Ben. Why, what is Tybalt?

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

Ben. The what?

Mer. The pox of such antic, lisping, affecting fantasticoes-  
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,  
grandsir, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange  
flies, these fashion-mongers, these pardona-mi'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.

Ben. Here comes Romeo! here comes Romeo!

Mer. 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, This be a gray eye or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, bon jour! There's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

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

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

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

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

Rom. Meaning, to cursy.

Mer. Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Rom. A most courteous exposition.

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

Rom. Pink for flower.

Mer. Right.

Rom. Why, then is my pump well-flower'd.

Mer. Well said! 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.

Rom. O single-sold jest, solely singular for the singleness!

Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio! My wits faint.

Rom. Swits and spurs, swits and spurs! or I'll cry a match.

Mer. 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?

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

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

Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not!

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

Rom. And is it not, then, well serv'd in to a sweet goose?

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

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

Mer. 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 drivelling love is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

Ben. Stop there, stop there!

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

Ben. Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

Mer. O, thou art deceiv'd! 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.

Rom. Here's goodly gear!

Enter Nurse and her Man [Peter].

Mer. A sail, a sail!

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

Nurse. Peter!

Peter. Anon.

Nurse. My fan, Peter.

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

Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

Mer. God ye good-den, fair gentlewoman.

Nurse. Is it good-den?

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

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

Rom. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made for himself to mar.

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

Rom. 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.

Mer. Yea, is the worst well? Very well took, i' faith! wisely, wisely.

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

Ben. She will endite him to some supper.

Mer. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Rom. What hast thou found?

Mer. No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent  
He walks by them and sings.

An old hare hoar,  
And an old hare hoar,  
Is very good meat in Lent;  
But a hare that is hoar

Is too much for a score  
When it hoars ere it be spent.

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

Rom. I will follow you.

Mer. Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell,  
[sings] lady, lady, lady.

Exeunt Mercutio, Benvolio.

Nurse. Marry, farewell! I Pray you, Sir, what saucy merchant  
was this that was so full of his ropery?

Rom. 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 'a speak anything against me, I'll take him down, an  
'a  
were lustier than he is, and twenty such jacks; and if I cannot,  
I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his  
flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates. 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. Scurvy knave! Pray you, sir, a word; and, as I told you,  
my young lady bid me enquire you out. What she bid me say, I  
will keep to myself; but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead  
her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of  
behaviour, 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 off'red to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

Rom. 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.

Rom. 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.

Rom. Bid her devise

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

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

Rom. Go to! I say you shall.

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

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

Within this hour my man shall be with thee  
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair,  
Which to the high topgallant of my joy  
Must be my convoy in the secret night.  
Farewell. Be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains.  
Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

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

Rom. What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

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

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

Nurse. Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord!  
when 'twas a little prating thing- O, there is a nobleman in  
town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard; but she,  
good soul, had as lieve 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?

Rom. 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.

Rom. Commend me to thy lady.

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

Peter. Anon.

Nurse. Peter, take my fan, and go before, and apace.

Exeunt.