

**By This Hand (I Swear)**

**By:**

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ROMEO AND JULIET

Romeo  
Juliet  
Nurse  
Tybalt

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Beatrice  
Benedick  
Hero  
Ursula  
Claudio  
Don Pedro

**ACT I**  
Scene I

*Evening. ENSEMBLE is upstage preparing for the ball. BEN and BEAT meet downstage. Music in the background.*

**BENEDICK**

What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

**BEATRICE**

Is it possible disdain should die while she hath  
such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick?  
Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come  
in her presence.

**BENEDICK**

Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I  
am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I  
would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard  
heart; for, truly, I love none.

**BEATRICE**

A dear happiness to women: they would else have  
been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God  
and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I  
had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man  
swear he loves me.

**BENEDICK**

God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some  
gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate  
scratched face.

**BEATRICE**

Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such  
a face as yours were.

**BENEDICK**

Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

**BEATRICE**

A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

**BENEDICK**

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and

so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

**BEATRICE**

You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

Scene II

*BENEDICK and BEATRICE exit to go and get their masks. Music starts and ENSEMBLE breaks into a small court dance. BEN and BEAT enter, join the dance, and then break aside to have their conversation.*

**BEATRICE**

Will you not tell me who told you so?

**BENEDICK**

No, you shall pardon me.

**BEATRICE**

Nor will you not tell me who you are?

**BENEDICK**

Not now.

**BEATRICE**

That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales:'--well this was Signior Benedick that said so.

**BENEDICK**

What's he?

**BEATRICE**

I am sure you know him well enough.

**BENEDICK**

Not I, believe me.

**BEATRICE**

Did he never make you laugh?

**BENEDICK**

I pray you, what is he?

**BEATRICE**

Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool;  
only his gift is in devising impossible slanders:  
none but libertines delight in him; and the  
commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany;  
for he both pleases men and angers them, and then  
they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in  
the fleet: I would he had boarded me.

**BENEDICK**

When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

**BEATRICE**

Do, do: he'll but break a comparison or two on me;  
which, peradventure not marked or not laughed at,  
strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a  
partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no  
supper that night.

*Music*

We must follow the leaders.

**BENEDICK**

In every good thing.

**BEATRICE**

Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at  
the next turning.

*All dance. From the ensemble, ROMEO and JULIET approach one another downstage.*

**ROMEO**

[To JULIET] If I profane with my unworthiest hand  
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:  
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand  
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

**JULIET**

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,  
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;  
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

**ROMEO**

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

**JULIET**

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

**ROMEO**

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;  
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

**JULIET**

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

**ROMEO**

Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.  
Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

**JULIET**

Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

**ROMEO**

Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged!  
Give me my sin again.

**JULIET**

You kiss by the book.

*NURSE notices ROMEO and JULIET and goes to them.*

**Nurse**

Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

**ROMEO**

What is her mother?

**Nurse**

Marry, bachelor,  
Her mother is the lady of the house,  
And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous  
I nursed her daughter, that you talk'd withal;  
I tell you, he that can lay hold of her  
Shall have the chinks.

**ROMEO**

Is she a Capulet?  
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.  
Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

*The NURSE drags JULIET downstage and whispers to her while BENE starts his monologue and moves downstage.*

**BENEDICK**

O, she misused me past the endurance of a block!  
an oak but with one green leaf on it would have  
answered her; my very visor began to assume life and  
scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been  
myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was  
duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest  
with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood  
like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at  
me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs:  
if her breath were as terrible as her terminations,  
there were no living near her; she would infect to  
the north star. I would not marry her, though she  
were endowed with all that Adam had left him before  
he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have  
turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make  
the fire too. Come, talk not of her: you shall find  
her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God  
some scholar would conjure her; for certainly, while  
she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a  
sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they  
would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror  
and perturbation follows her.

*Exeunt all but JULIET and NURSE.*

**JULIET**

Come hither, nurse. What is yond lady fair?

**Nurse**

The child and heir of old Leonato.

**JULIET**

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

**Nurse**

Marry, that, I think, be drunken Benedick.

**JULIET**

What's he that follows there, that would not dance?

**Nurse**

I know not.

**JULIET**

Go ask his name: if he be married.  
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

**Nurse**

His name is Romeo, and a Montague;  
The only son of your great enemy.

**JULIET**

My only love sprung from my only hate!  
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!  
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,  
That I must love a loathed enemy.

**Nurse**

What's this? what's this?

**JULIET**

A rhyme I learn'd even now  
Of one I danced withal.

**Nurse**

Anon, anon!  
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.

**ACT II**  
Scene I

*Nighttime, outside the ball. BENEDICK, drunk, wanders the garden.*

**BENEDICK**

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviors to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabour and the pipe: I have known when he would have walked ten mile a-foot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turned orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many



strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God.

*ROMEO enters. BENEDICK stumbles out during the following monologue.*

**ROMEO**

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

*JULIET appears above at a window*

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.  
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 eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night.  
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!

**JULIET**

Ay me!

**ROMEO**

She speaks:

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

**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, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
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 bescreen'd 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 utterance, yet I know the sound:  
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

**ROMEO**

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

**JULIET**

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?  
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'er-perch these walls;  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do that dares love attempt;  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

**JULIET**

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

**ROMEO**

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

**JULIET**

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

**ROMEO**

I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;  
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, who 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 wash'd with the farthest sea,  
I would adventure for such merchandise.

**JULIET**

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 to-night  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!  
Dost thou love me? 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.

**ROMEO**

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

**JULIET**

O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,  
That monthly changes in her circled orb,  
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**

Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,  
I have no joy of this contract to-night:  
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!

**ROMEO**

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

**JULIET**

What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

**ROMEO**

The 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 within*

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!  
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.

*Exit, above*

**ROMEO**

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

## Scene II

*A park at noon. Enter BENEDICK, perhaps to play music. Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.*

**BENEDICK**

Ha! the prince and  
Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

*Withdraws*

**DON PEDRO**

Come hither, Claudio. What was it you told me of  
to-day, that Leonato's niece Beatrice was in love with  
Signior Benedick?

**CLAUDIO**

I did, indeed.

**DON PEDRO**

How, how, pray you? You amaze me: I would have I  
thought her spirit had been invincible against all  
assaults of affection.

**CLAUDIO**

I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially  
against Benedick.

**BENEDICK**

I should think this a gull, but that the  
prince speaks it: knavery cannot,  
sure, hide himself in such reverence.

**CLAUDIO**

He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up.

**DON PEDRO**

Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

**CLAUDIO**

No; and swears she never will: that's her torment. I  
am sometime afeared she will do a desperate outrage  
to herself: it is very true.

**DON PEDRO**

It were good that Benedick knew of it by some  
other, if she will not discover it.

**CLAUDIO**

To what end? He would make but a sport of it and  
torment the poor lady worse.

**DON PEDRO**

An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

**CLAUDIO**

And she is exceeding wise.

**DON PEDRO**

In every thing but in loving Benedick.  
Shall we go seek him, and tell him of her love?

**CLAUDIO**

Never tell him, my lord: let her wear it out with good counsel.

**DON PEDRO**

Nay, that's impossible: she may wear her heart out first.

*Exeunt CLAUDIO and DON PEDRO.*

**BENEDICK**

[Coming forward] This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I

were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day!  
she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in  
her.

*Enter BEATRICE*

**BEATRICE**

Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

**BENEDICK**

Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

**BEATRICE**

I took no more pains for those thanks than you take  
pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would  
not have come.

**BENEDICK**

You take pleasure then in the message?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's  
point and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach,  
signior: fare you well.

*Exit BEATRICE.*

**BENEDICK**

Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in  
to dinner;' there's a double meaning in that 'I took  
no more pains for those thanks than you took pains  
to thank me.' that's as much as to say, Any pains  
that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do  
not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not  
love her, I am a fool. I will go get her picture.

*Exit BENEDICK.*

### **ACT III**

#### Scene I

*Enter TYBALT and ROMEO.*

**TYBALT**

O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!



That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,  
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

**ROMEO**

Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again,  
That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul  
Is but a little way above our heads,  
Staying for thine to keep him company:  
Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.

**TYBALT**

Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,  
Shalt with him hence.

**ROMEO**

This shall determine that.

*They fight; TYBALT falls. Setting changes to JULIET's room. Afternoon.*

**JULIET**

O, here comes my nurse,  
And she brings news; and every tongue that speaks  
But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.

*Enter Nurse, with cords*

Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the cords  
That Romeo bid thee fetch?

**Nurse**

Ay, ay, the cords.

*Throws them down*

**JULIET**

Ay me! what news? why dost thou wring thy hands?

**Nurse**

Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished;  
Romeo that kill'd him, he is banished.

**JULIET**

O God! did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

**Nurse**

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

**JULIET**

Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,  
When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?  
Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;  
Your tributary drops belong to woe,  
Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.  
My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;  
And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband:  
All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?  
Some word there was, worsers than Tybalt's death,  
That murder'd me: I would forget it fain;  
But, O, it presses to my memory,  
Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds:  
'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo--banished,'  
That 'banished,' that one word 'banished,'  
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death  
Was woe enough, if it had ended there:  
Why follow'd not, when she said 'Tybalt's dead,'  
Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,  
Which modern lamentations might have moved?  
But with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,  
'Romeo is banished,' to speak that word,  
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,  
All slain, all dead. 'Romeo is banished!'  
There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,  
In that word's death; no words can that woe sound.  
Take up those cords: poor ropes, you are beguiled,  
Both you and I; for Romeo is exiled:  
He made you for a highway to my bed;  
But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.  
Come, cords, come, nurse; I'll to my wedding-bed;  
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

**Nurse**

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

**JULIET**

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

*Exeunt*

Scene II

*The park, evening. BEATRICE eavesdropping on HERO and URSULA.*

**HERO**

*Approaching the bower*

No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;  
I know her spirits are as coy and wild  
As haggerds of the rock.

**URSULA**

But are you sure  
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

**HERO**

So says the prince and my new-trothed lord, Claudio.

**URSULA**

And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

**HERO**

They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;  
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,  
To wish him wrestle with affection,  
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

**URSULA**

Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman  
Deserve as full as fortunate a bed  
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

**HERO**

O god of love! I know he doth deserve  
As much as may be yielded to a man:  
But Nature never framed a woman's heart  
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice;  
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,  
Misprising what they look on, and her wit  
Values itself so highly that to her  
All matter else seems weak: she cannot love,  
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,  
She is so self-endear'd.

**URSULA**

Sure, I think so;  
And therefore certainly it were not good  
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

**HERO**

Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,  
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,  
But she would spell him backward: if fair-faced,  
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;  
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique,  
Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;  
If low, an agate very vilely cut;  
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;  
If silent, why, a block moved with none.  
So turns she every man the wrong side out  
And never gives to truth and virtue that  
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

**URSULA**

Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

**HERO**

No, not to be so odd and from all fashions  
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable:  
But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,  
She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me  
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.  
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,  
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:  
It were a better death than die with mocks,  
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

**URSULA**

Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.

**HERO**

No; rather I will go to Benedick  
And counsel him to fight against his passion.  
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders  
To stain my cousin with: one doth not know  
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

**URSULA**

O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.  
She cannot be so much without true judgment--

Having so swift and excellent a wit  
As she is prized to have--as to refuse  
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

**HERO**

He is the only man of Italy.  
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

**URSULA**

I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,  
Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick,  
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,  
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

**HERO**

Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

**URSULA**

His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.  
When are you married, madam?

**HERO**

Why, every day, to-morrow. Come, go in:  
I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel  
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

*Exeunt ENSEMBLE.*

**BEATRICE**

[Coming forward]

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?  
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?  
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!  
No glory lives behind the back of such.  
And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:  
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee  
To bind our loves up in a holy band;  
For others say thou dost deserve, and I  
Believe it better than reportingly.

*Exit*

**ACT IV**  
**Scene I**

*JULIET's room, early the next morning.*

**JULIET**

Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:  
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;  
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree:  
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

**ROMEO**

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.  
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

**JULIET**

Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:  
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,  
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,  
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:  
Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not to be gone.

**ROMEO**

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

**JULIET**

It is, it is: hie hence, be gone, away!  
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,  
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.  
Some say the lark makes sweet division;  
This doth not so, for she divideth us:  
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes,  
O, now I would they had changed voices too!

Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day,  
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

**ROMEO**

More light and light; more dark and dark our woes!

*Enter Nurse, to the chamber*

**Nurse**

Madam!

**JULIET**

Nurse?

**Nurse**

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

*Exit*

**JULIET**

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

**ROMEO**

Farewell, farewell! one kiss, and I'll descend.

*He goeth down*

**JULIET**

O God, I have an ill-divining soul!  
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,  
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb:  
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

**ROMEO**

And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:  
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu!

*Exit*

**JULIET**

O fortune, fortune! all men call thee fickle:  
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him.  
That is renown'd for faith? Be fickle, fortune;  
For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,

But send him back.

Scene II

*Afternoon. BEATRICE enters, then BENEDICK.*

**BENEDICK**

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

**BENEDICK**

I will not desire that.

**BEATRICE**

You have no reason; I do it freely.

**BENEDICK**

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

**BEATRICE**

Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

**BENEDICK**

Is there any way to show such friendship?

**BEATRICE**

A very even way, but no such friend.

**BENEDICK**

May a man do it?

**BEATRICE**

It is a man's office, but not yours.

**BENEDICK**

I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?

**BEATRICE**

As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.



**BENEDICK**

By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

**BEATRICE**

Do not swear, and eat it.

**BENEDICK**

I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

**BEATRICE**

Will you not eat your word?

**BENEDICK**

With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

**BEATRICE**

Why, then, God forgive me!

**BENEDICK**

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

**BEATRICE**

You have stayed me in a happy hour: I was about to protest I loved you.

**BENEDICK**

And do it with all thy heart.

**BEATRICE**

I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

**BENEDICK**

Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

**BEATRICE**

Kill Claudio.

**BENEDICK**

Ha! not for the wide world.

**BEATRICE**

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

**BENEDICK**

Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

**BEATRICE**

I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go.

**BENEDICK**

Beatrice,--

**BEATRICE**

In faith, I will go.

**BENEDICK**

We'll be friends first.

**BEATRICE**

You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

**BENEDICK**

Is Claudio thine enemy?

**BEATRICE**

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, --O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

**BENEDICK**

Hear me, Beatrice,--

**BEATRICE**

Talk with a man out at a window! A proper saying!

**BENEDICK**

Nay, but, Beatrice,--

**BEATRICE**

Sweet Hero! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

**BENEDICK**

Beat—

**BEATRICE**

Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony,  
a goodly count, Count Comfect; a sweet gallant,  
surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I  
had any friend would be a man for my sake! But  
manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into  
compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and  
trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules  
that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a  
man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

**BENEDICK**

Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

**BEATRICE**

Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

**BENEDICK**

Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

**BENEDICK**

Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will  
kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand,  
Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you  
hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your  
cousin: I must say she is dead: and so, farewell.

*Exeunt all.*

Scene III

*Nighttime. Juliet enters her room with dagger and potion.*

**JULIET**

Come, vial.  
What if this mixture do not work at all?  
Shall I be married then to-morrow morning?  
No, no: this shall forbid it: lie thou there.

*Laying down her dagger*

What if it be a poison, which the friar  
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,

Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,  
Because he married me before to Romeo?  
I fear it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,  
For he hath still been tried a holy man.  
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
I wake before the time that Romeo  
Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!  
Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,  
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?  
Or, if I live, is it not very like,  
The horrible conceit of death and night,  
Together with the terror of the place,--  
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,  
Where, for these many hundred years, the bones  
Of all my buried ancestors are packed:  
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,  
Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,  
At some hours in the night spirits resort;--  
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,  
Environed with all these hideous fears?  
And madly play with my forefather's joints?  
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?  
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,  
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?  
O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost  
Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body  
Upon a rapier's point: stay, Tybalt, stay!  
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

*She falls upon her bed, within the curtains.  
ENSEMBLE lays a sheet over JULIET.*

#### Scene IV

*The park, afternoon. BENEDICK strums an instrument in his attempt to play a song. ROMEO enters; the two are in the same park, but both are too preoccupied to pay much mind to each other.*

#### **BENEDICK**

*Sings*

The god of love,  
That sits above,  
And knows me, and knows me,  
How pitiful I deserve,--  
I mean in singing; but in loving, Leander the good

swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole bookful of these quondam carpet-mangers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried: I can find out no rhyme to 'lady' but 'baby,' an innocent rhyme; for 'scorn,' 'horn,' a hard rhyme; for, 'school,' 'fool,' a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings: no, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

*BENEDICK retreats within himself. ROMEO speaks.*

**ROMEO**

I dreamt my lady came and found me dead--  
Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to think!--  
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips,  
That I revived, and was an emperor.  
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,  
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!  
News from Verona! (*5 beats*)  
Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.  
Let's see for means: O mischief, thou art swift  
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!  
I do remember an apothecary,--  
And hereabouts he dwells,--which late I noted  
In tatter'd weeds, with overwhelming brows,  
Culling of simples; meagre were his looks,  
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones:  
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuff'd, and other skins  
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves  
A beggarly account of empty boxes,  
Green earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds,  
Remnants of packthread and old cakes of roses,  
Were thinly scatter'd, to make up a show.  
Noting this penury, to myself I said  
'An if a man did need a poison now,  
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,  
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.'  
O, this same thought did but forerun my need;  
And this same needy man must sell it me.  
As I remember, this should be the house.

*Exit ROMEO. Enter BEATRICE.*

**BENEDICK**

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

**BENEDICK**

O, stay but till then!

**BEATRICE**

'Then' is spoken; fare you well now: and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came; which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

**BENEDICK**

Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

**BEATRICE**

Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unkissed.

**BENEDICK**

Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

**BEATRICE**

For them all together; which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

**BENEDICK**

Suffer love! a good epithet! I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

**BEATRICE**

In spite of your heart, I think; alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

**BENEDICK**

Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

**BEATRICE**

It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

**BENEDICK**

An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the lime of good neighbours. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

**BEATRICE**

And how long is that, think you?

**BENEDICK**

Question: why, an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum: therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy: and now tell me, how doth your cousin?

**BEATRICE**

Very ill.

**BENEDICK**

And how do you?

**BEATRICE**

Very ill too.

**BENEDICK**

Serve God, love me and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

*Enter URSULA*

**URSULA**

Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil at home: it is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is

fed and gone. Will you come presently?

**BEATRICE**

Will you go hear this news, signior?

**BENEDICK**

I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes; and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle's.

*Exeunt*

**ACT V**

Scene I

*Evening. The stage splits into two simultaneous scenes in different locations: ROMEO and JULIET at JULIET's tomb, and BEATRICE and BENEDICK at a ceremonial dance. ROMEO enters with a pickaxe and crowbar.*

**ROMEO**

Why I descend into this bed of death,  
Is partly to behold my lady's face;  
But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger  
A precious ring, a ring that I must use  
In dear employment: therefore hence, be gone:

*Approaches the tomb*

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!

*ROMEO opens the tomb. BENEDICK and MASKED DANCING ENSEMBLE enters.*

**BENEDICK**

Soft and fair. Which is Beatrice?

**BEATRICE**

[Unmasking] I answer to that name. What is your will?

**BENEDICK**

Do not you love me?

**BEATRICE**

Why, no; no more than reason.



**BENEDICK**

Why, then your uncle and the prince and Claudio  
Have been deceived; they swore you did.

*BEATRICE and BENEDICK begin to dance together.*

**ROMEO**

How oft when men are at the point of death  
Have they been merry! which their keepers call  
A lightning before death: O, how may I  
Call this a lightning? O my love! my wife!  
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:  
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

**BEATRICE**

Do not you love me?

**BENEDICK**

Troth, no; no more than reason.

**BEATRICE**

Why, then my cousin Margaret and Ursula  
Are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

**ROMEO**

Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?  
O, what more favour can I do to thee,  
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain  
To sunder his that was thine enemy?  
Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,  
Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe  
That unsubstantial death is amorous,  
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;  
And never from this palace of dim night  
Depart again: here, here will I remain  
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here  
Will I set up my everlasting rest,  
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars  
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!  
Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you

The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!  
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide!  
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!  
Here's to my love!

*Drinks*

O true apothecary!  
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

*ROMEO dies. JULIET awakes and gathers her bearings.*

**BENEDICK**

They swore that you were almost sick for me.

**BEATRICE**

They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

**BENEDICK**

'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?

**BEATRICE**

No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

**JULIET**

O comfortable friar! where is my lord?  
I do remember well where I should be,  
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

**BENEDICK**

A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts.  
Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take  
thee for pity.

**JULIET**

What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's hand?  
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end:  
O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips;  
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,  
To make die with a restorative.

**BEATRICE**

I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield  
upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life,  
for I was told you were in a consumption.

**BENEDICK**

Peace! I will stop your mouth.

*BENEDICK kisses BEATRICE as JULIET kisses ROMEO.*

**JULIET**

Thy lips are warm.  
O happy dagger!

*Snatching ROMEO's dagger*

This is thy sheath;

*Stabs herself*

There rust, and let me die.

*Falls on ROMEO's body, and dies.*

**DON PEDRO**

How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

**BENEDICK**

I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of  
wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost  
thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No:  
if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear  
nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do  
purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any  
purpose that the world can say against it; and  
therefore never flout at me for what I have said  
against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my  
conclusion. Come, come, we are friends: let's have a dance ere  
we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts  
and our wives' heels.  
Strike up, pipers.

*ROMEO and JULIET rise from their grave and join the living ENSEMBLE in dance.*

*End of Play*