

Romeo and Juliet

1.3

Enter Capulet's Wife and the Nurse

CAPULET'S WIFE

Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.

NURSE

Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,
I bade her come. What, lamb, what, ladybird±±
God forbid±±where is this girl? What, Juliet!

Enter Juliet

JULIET How now, who calls? 5

NURSE Your mother.

JULIET

Madam, I am here. What is your will?

CAPULET'S WIFE

This is the matter.±±Nurse, give leave a while.
We must talk in secret.±±Nurse, come back again.
I have remembered me, thou's hear our counsel. 10
Thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty age.

NURSE

Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

CAPULET'S WIFE She's not fourteen.

NURSE I'll lay fourteen of my teeth±±and yet, to my teen
be it spoken, I have but four±±she's not fourteen. How 15
long is it now to Lammastide?

CAPULET'S WIFE A fortnight and odd days.

NURSE

Even or odd, of all days in the year
Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she±±God rest all Christian souls!±± 20
Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God;
She was too good for me. But, as I said,
On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen,
That shall she, marry, I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years, 25
And she was weaned±±I never shall forget it±±
Of all the days of the year upon that day,
For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall.

My lord and you were then at Mantua. 30
Nay, I do bear a brain! But, as I said,
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
To see it tetchy and fall out wi'th' dug!
'Shake', quoth the dove-house! 'Twas no need, I trow, 35
To bid me trudge;
And since that time it is eleven years,
For then she could stand high-lone. Nay, by th' rood,
She could have run and waddled all about,
For even the day before, she broke her brow, 40
And then my husband±±God be with his soul,
A was a merry man!±±took up the child.
'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit,
Wilt thou not, Jule?' And, by my halidom, 45
The pretty wretch left crying and said 'Ay'.
To see now how a jest shall come about!
I warrant an I should live a thousand years
I never should forget it. 'Wilt thou not, Jule?' quoth he,
And, pretty fool, it stinted and said 'Ay'. 50

CAPULET'S WIFE

Enough of this. I pray thee hold thy peace.

NURSE

Yes, madam. Yet I cannot choose but laugh
To think it should leave crying and say 'Ay'.
And yet, I warrant, it had upon it brow
A bump as big as a young cock'rel's stone. 55
A perilous knock, and it cried bitterly.
'Yea,' quoth my husband, 'fall'st upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou com'st to age,
Wilt thou not, Jule?' It stinted and said 'Ay'.

JULIET

And stint thou too, I pray thee, Nurse, say I. 60

NURSE

Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace,
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed.
An I might live to see thee married once,
I have my wish.

CAPULET'S WIFE

Marry, that `marry' is the very theme
I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your dispositions to be married?

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JULIET

It is an honour that I dream not of.

NURSE

`An honour'! Were not I thine only nurse,
I would say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.

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CAPULET'S WIFE

Well, think of marriage now. Younger than you
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,
Are made already mothers. By my count
I was your mother much upon these years
That you are now a maid. Thus then, in brief:
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

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NURSE

A man, young lady, lady, such a man
As all the world±±why, he's a man of wax.

CAPULET'S WIFE

Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

NURSE

Nay, he's a flower, in faith, a very flower.

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CAPULET'S WIFE *(to Juliet)*

What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
This night you shall behold him at our feast.
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen.
Examine every married lineament,
And see how one another lends content;
And what obscured in this fair volume lies
Find written in the margin of his eyes.
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
To beautify him only lacks a cover.
The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
For fair without the fair within to hide.
That book in many's eyes doth share the glory
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story.
So shall you share all that he doth possess
By having him, making yourself no less.

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NURSE

No less, nay, bigger. Women grow by men.

CAPULET'S WIFE *(to Juliet)*

Speak briefly: can you like of Paris' love?

JULIET

I'll look to like, if looking liking move;

But no more deep will I endart mine eye

100

Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

Enter [Peter]

[PETER] Madam, the guests are come, supper served up,
you called, my young lady asked for, the Nurse cursed
in the pantry, and everything in extremity. I must hence
to wait. I beseech you follow straight.

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CAPULET'S WIFE

We follow thee.

Exit [Peter]

Juliet, the County stays.

NURSE

Go, girl; seek happy nights to happy days.

Exeunt