

Romeo and Juliet

5.1

Enter Romeo

ROMEO

If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand.
My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,
And all this day an unaccustomed spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts. 5
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 possessed 10
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

Enter Balthasar, Romeo's man, [booted]

News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How fares my Juliet? That I ask again, 15
For nothing can be ill if she be well.

BALTHASAR

Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault, 20
And presently took post to tell it you.
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

ROMEO

Is it e'en so? Then I defy you, stars.
Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and paper, 25
And hire posthorses. I will hence tonight.

BALTHASAR

I do beseech you, sir, have patience.
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.

ROMEO Tush, thou art deceived.
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do. 30
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

BALTHASAR
No, my good lord.

ROMEO No matter. Get thee gone,
And hire those horses. I'll be with thee straight.

Exit Balthasar

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.
Let's see for means. O mischief, thou art swift 35
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!

I do remember an apothecary,
And hereabouts a dwells, which late I noted,
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples. Meagre were his looks. 40

Sharp misery had worn him to the bones,
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuffed, and other skins

Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes, 45
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses
Were thinly scattered to make up a show.

Noting this penury, to myself I said
'An if a man did need a poison now, 50
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. 55
Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.
What ho, apothecary!

Enter Apothecary

APOTHECARY Who calls so loud?

ROMEO
Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.

He offers money

Hold, there is forty ducats. Let me have
A dram of poison±±such soon-speeding gear 60
As will disperse itself through all the veins,

That the life-weary taker may fall dead,
And that the trunk may be discharged of breath
As violently as hasty powder fired
Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

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APOTHECARY

Such mortal drugs I have, but Mantua's law
Is death to any he that utters them.

ROMEO

Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,
And fear'st to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,
Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back.
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law.
The world affords no law to make thee rich.
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

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APOTHECARY

My poverty but not my will consents.

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ROMEO

I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

APOTHECARY (*handing Romeo poison*)

Put this in any liquid thing you will
And drink it off, and if you had the strength
Of twenty men it would dispatch you straight.

ROMEO (*giving money*)

There is thy gold—worse poison to men's souls,
Doing more murder in this loathsome world,
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.
Farewell, buy food, and get thyself in flesh.

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[*Exit Apothecary*]

Come, cordial and not poison, go with me
To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

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Exit