

Romeo and Juliet

2.4

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
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 10
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. 15
But old folks, many feign as they were dead±±
Unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.

Enter the 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. 20

Exit Peter

JULIET

Now, good sweet Nurse±±O Lord, why look'st thou sad?
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;
If good, thou sham'st the music of sweet news
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

NURSE

I am a-weary. Give me leave a while. 25
Fie, how my bones ache. What a jaunce have I!

JULIET

I would thou hadst my bones and I thy news.
Nay, come, I pray thee speak, good, good Nurse, speak.

NURSE

Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay a while?
Do you not see that I am out of breath? 30

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
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.
Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that. 35
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 40
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? 45

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±±

[Juliet rubs her back]

a' t'other side±±ah, my back, my back!

50

Beshrew your heart for sending me about
To catch my death with jauncing 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 55
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 60
a'Where is your mother?'^{o'}

NURSE

O, God's Lady dear!

Are you so hot? Marry come up, I trow.
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

JULIET

Here's such a coil! Come, what says Romeo?

65

NURSE

Have you got leave to go to shrift today?

JULIET I have.

NURSE

Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' 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.

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JULIET

Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell.

Exeunt [severally]