

# Act III, Scene i - Text

*A public place.*

*Enter Tybalt and others*

**Benvolio:**

By my head, here come the Capulets.

**Mercutio:**

By my heel, I care not.

**Tybalt:**

Follow me close, for I will speak to them.

35

Gentlemen, good den: a word with one of you.

**Mercutio:**

And but one word with one of us? Couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.

**Tybalt:**

You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, and you will give me occasion.

40

**Mercutio:**

Could you not take some occasion without giving?

**Tybalt:**

Mercutio, thou consortest with Romeo.

**Mercutio:**

Consort! what, dost thou make us minstrels? And thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

45

**Benvolio:**

We talk here in the public haunt of men:  
Either withdraw unto some private place,  
And reason coldly of your grievances,  
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

50

**Mercutio:**

Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze;  
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

*Enter Romeo.*

**Tybalt:**

Well, peace be with you, sir: here comes my man.

**Mercutio:**

But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery:  
 Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower; 55  
 Your worship in that sense may call him 'man.'

**Tybalt:**

Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford  
 No better term than this,--thou art a villain.

**Romeo:**

Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee  
 Doth much excuse the appertaining rage 60  
 To such a greeting: villain am I none;  
 Therefore farewell; I see thou know'st me not.

**Tybalt:**

Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries  
 That thou hast done me; therefore turn and draw.

**Romeo:**

I do protest, I never injured thee, 65  
 But love thee better than thou canst devise,  
 Till thou shalt know the reason of my love:  
 And so, good Capulet, - which name I tender  
 As dearly as my own, - be satisfied.

**Mercutio:**

O calm, dishonourable, vile submission! 70  
 Alla stoccata carries it away.

*Draws*

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

**Tybalt:**

What wouldst thou have with me?

**Mercutio:**

Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives  
 that I mean to make bold withal, and as you shall use 75  
 me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight. Will you  
 pluck your sword out of his pilcher by the ears? Make  
 haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

**Tybalt:**

I am for you. [Drawing.]

**Romeo:**

Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up. 80

**Mercutio:**

Come, sir, your passado.

*They fight.*

**Romeo:**

Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons.  
Gentlemen, for shame, forbear this outrage!  
Tybalt, Mercutio, the prince expressly hath  
Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.  
Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

85

*Tybalt under Romeo's arm thrust Mercutio in. Exit Tybalt.*

**Mercutio:**

I am hurt.  
A plague a' both your houses! I am sped.  
Is he gone, and hath nothing?

**Benvolio:**

What, art thou hurt?

**Mercutio:**

Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.  
Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

90

*Exit Page*

**Romeo:**

Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

**Mercutio:**

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church  
door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow,  
and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I  
warrant, for this world. A plague o'both your houses!  
'Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to  
death! a braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the  
book of arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us?  
I was hurt under your arm.

95

**Romeo:**

I thought all for the best.

100

**Mercutio:**

Help me into some house, Benvolio,  
Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses!  
They have made worms' meat of me: I have it,  
And soundly too: your houses!

*Exeunt Mercutio and Benvolio.*

**Romeo:**

This gentleman, the prince's near ally, 105  
 My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt  
 In my behalf; my reputation stain'd  
 With Tybalt's slander,--Tybalt, that an hour  
 Hath been my kinsman! O sweet Juliet,  
 Thy beauty hath made me effeminate 110  
 And in my temper soften'd valour's steel!

*Enter Benvolio.*

**Benvolio:**

O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!  
 That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,  
 Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

**Romeo:**

This day's black fate on more days doth depend; 115  
 This but begins the woe, others must end.

**Glossary**

**Good den:** good day.

**Consortest:** hang out with.

**Consort:** a group of musicians or minstrels.

**Fiddlestick:** violin bow.

**'Zounds:** an exclamation.

**Livery:** uniform.

**Alla stoccata:** a fencing term.

**King of Cats:** there was a story in Shakespeare's time featuring a cat called Tybalt.

**Dry-beat:** to beat up without drawing blood.

**Pilcher:** case.

**Passado:** fencing term.

**Bandyng:** fighting.

**Braggart:** a boastful person.

**Book of arithmetic:** a book of fencing by numbers.

**Moe days:** days in the future.