

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;
Your worship in that sense may call him 'man.' 55

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!
Alla stoccata carries it away. 70

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
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. 75

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,
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
And in my temper soften'd valour's steel!

105

110

Enter Benvolio.

Benvolio:

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

Romeo:

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

115

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.