

JULIET

85 Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.
Fain would I dwell on form. Fain, fain deny
What I have spoke. But farewell compliment!
90 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say "ay,"
And I will take thy word. Yet if thou swear'st
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,
They say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.
95 Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo. But else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light.
100 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more coying to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was 'ware,
My true love's passion. Therefore pardon me,
105 And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon,
110 That monthly changes in her circle orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all.
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
115 And I'll believe thee.

JULIET

You can't see my face because it's dark out.
Otherwise, you'd see me blushing about the things
you've heard me say tonight. I would be happy to
keep up good manners and deny the things I said.
But forget about good manners. Do you love me? I
know you'll say "yes," and I'll believe you. But if you
swear you love me, you might turn out to be lying.
They say *Jove* laughs when lovers lie to each
other. Oh Romeo, if you really love me, say it truly.
Or if you think it's too easy and quick to win my
heart, I'll frown and play hard-to-get, as long as
that will make you try to win me, but otherwise I
wouldn't act that way for anything. In truth,
handsome Montague, I like you too much, so you
may think my behavior is loose. But trust me,
gentleman, I'll prove myself more faithful than girls
who act coy and play hard-to-get. I should have
been more standoffish, I confess, but you
overheard me talking about the love in my heart
when I didn't know you were there. So excuse me,
and do not assume that because you made me
love you so easily my love isn't serious.

ROMEO

Lady, I swear by the sacred moon above, the
moon that paints the tops of fruit trees with silver

JULIET

Don't swear by the moon. The moon is always
changing. Every month its position in the sky shifts.
I don't want you to turn out to be that inconsistent
too.

ROMEO

What should I swear by?

JULIET

Don't swear at all. But if you have to swear, swear
by your wonderful self, which is the god I worship
like an idol, and then I'll believe you.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love—

JULIET

Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract tonight.

It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,

Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be

¹²⁰ Ere one can say "It lightens." Sweet, good night.

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we
meet.

Good night, good night! As sweet repose and
rest

Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

ROMEO

¹²⁵ O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

ROMEO

Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO

¹³⁰ Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose,
love?

JULIET

But to be frank, and give it thee again.

And yet I wish but for the thing I have.

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,

My love as deep. The more I give to thee,

¹³⁵ The more I have, for both are infinite.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love—

JULIET

Well, don't swear. Although you bring me joy, I

can't take joy in this exchange of promises tonight.

It's too crazy. We haven't done enough thinking. It's

too sudden. It's too much like lightning, which

flashes and then disappears before you can say,

"it's lightning." My sweet, good night. Our love,

which right now is like a flower bud in the summer
air, may turn out to be a beautiful flower by the

next time we meet. I hope you enjoy the same

sweet peace and rest I feel in my heart.

ROMEO

Oh, are you going to leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction could you possibly have tonight?

ROMEO

I would be satisfied if we made each other true
promises of love.

JULIET

I pledged my love to you before you asked me to.
Yet I wish I could take that promise back, so I had
it to give again.

ROMEO

You would take it back? Why would you do that,
my love?

JULIET

Only to be generous and give it to you once more.

But I'm wishing for something I already have. My

generosity to you is as limitless as the sea, and my

love is as deep. The more love I give you, the more

I have. Both loves are infinite.

NURSE calls from within

I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu.—
Anon, good Nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little. I will come again.

Exit JULIET, above

ROMEO

O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,
140 Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering sweet to be substantial.

Enter JULIET, above

JULIET

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night
indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow
145 By one that I'll procure to come to thee
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

NURSE

(from within) Madam!

JULIET

150 I come, anon.—But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee—

NURSE

(from within) Madam!

JULIET

By and by, I come.—
To cease thy strife and leave me to my grief.
155 Tomorrow will I send.

ROMEO

So thrive my soul—

JULIET

A thousand times good night!

Exit JULIET, above

The NURSE calls from offstage.

I hear a noise inside. Dear love, goodbye—Just a
minute, good Nurse. Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay here for a moment. I'll come back.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO

Oh, blessed, blessed night! Because it's dark out,
I'm afraid all this is just a dream, too sweet to be
real.

JULIET enters on her balcony.

JULIET

Three words, dear Romeo, and then it's good night
for real. If your intentions as a lover are truly
honorable and you want to marry me, send me
word tomorrow. I'll send a messenger to you, and
you can pass on a message telling me where and
when we'll be married. I'll lay all my fortunes at
your feet and follow you, my lord, all over the
world.

NURSE

(offstage) Madam!

JULIET

(to the NURSE) I'll be right there! *(to ROMEO)* But if
you don't have honorable intentions, I beg you—

NURSE

(offstage) Madam!

JULIET

Alright, I'm coming!—I beg you to stop trying for
me and leave me to my sadness. Tomorrow I'll
send the messenger.

ROMEO

My soul depends on it—

JULIET

A thousand times good night.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO

A thousand times the worse to want thy light.
Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their
books,

160 But love from love, toward school with heavy
looks.

Moves to exit Reenter JULIET, above

JULIET

Hist! Romeo, hist!—Oh, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud,
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,

165 And make her airy tongue more hoarse than
mine,
With repetition of "My Romeo!"

ROMEO

Leaving you is a thousand times worse than being
near you. A lover goes toward his beloved as
enthusiastically as a schoolboy leaving his books,
but when he leaves his girlfriend, he feels as
miserable as the schoolboy on his way to school.

*ROMEO starts to leave. JULIET returns, on her
balcony.*

JULIET

Hist, Romeo! Hist! Oh, I wish I could make a
falconer's call, so I could bring my little falcon
back again. I'm trapped in my family's house, so I
must be quiet. Otherwise I would rip open the
cave where Echo sleeps. I would make her repeat
his name until her voice grew more hoarse than
mine by repeating, "My Romeo!"

ROMEO

It is my soul that calls upon my name.
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

ROMEO

My soul is calling out my name. The sound of
lovers calling each others names through the
night is silver-sweet. It's the sweetest sound a
lover ever hears.

JULIET

170 Romeo!

ROMEO

My nyas?

JULIET

What o'clock tomorrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO

By the hour of nine.

JULIET

I will not fail. 'Tis twenty year till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

JULIET

Romeo!

ROMEO

My baby hawk?

JULIET

What time tomorrow should I send a messenger
to you?

ROMEO

By nine o'clock.

JULIET

I won't fail. From now until then seems like twenty
years. I have forgotten why I called you back.

ROMEO

Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET

175 I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO

And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

ROMEO

Let me stand here until you remember your reason.

JULIET

I'll forget it, and you'll have to stand there forever.
I'll only remember how much I love your company.

ROMEO

I'll keep standing here, even if you keep forgetting.
I'll forget that I have any home besides this spot right here.

JULIET

'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone.
180 And yet no further than a wanton's bird,
That lets it hop a little from his hand
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silken thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO

185 I would I were thy bird.

JULIET

Sweet, so would I.
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet
sorrow
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

Exit JULIET, above

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast.
190 Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest.
Hence will I to my ghostly friar's close cell,
His help to crave and my dear hap to tell.

Exit

JULIET

It's almost morning. I want to make you go, but I'd only let you go as far as a spoiled child lets his pet bird go. He lets the bird hop a little from his hand and then yanks him back by a string.

ROMEO

I wish I was your bird.

JULIET

My sweet, so do I. But I would kill you by petting you too much. Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow that I'll say good night until tonight becomes tomorrow.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO

I hope you sleep peacefully. I wish I were Sleep and Peace, so I could spend the night with you. Now I'll go see my priest, to ask for his help and tell him about my good luck.

He exits.

Glossary

Fain: gladly.

Jove: Jupiter, the king of Gods.

Ware: aware.

Adieu: goodbye.

Anon: I'm coming.

Hist: pssst!

Tassel-gentle: male hawk.

Echo: in classical myth, Echo was a nymph who could only repeat the ends of what others said. She fell in love with Narcissus, who spurned her.

Niësse: young hawk.

Gyves: shackles.