
Romeo and Juliet

Act II



Primary Documents

from *Faerie Queene* (1590-96) Edmund Spenser

At length they chaunst to meet vpon the way
An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voyde of malice bad,
And all the way he prayed, as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was:
And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge aduentures, which abroad did pas.
Ah my deare Sonne (quoth he) how should, alas,
Silly old man, that liues in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such things to mell.

But if of daunger which hereby doth dwell,
And homebred euill ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrey farre and neare.
Of such (said he) I chiefly do inquire,
And shall you well reward to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare:
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature liues so long a space.

Far hence (quoth he) in wastfull wilderness
His dwelling is, by which no liuing wight
May euer passe, but thorough great distresse.
Now (sayd the Lady) draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forweared be: for what so strong,
But wanting rest will also want of might?
The Sunne that measures heauen all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the *Ocean* waues
emong.

Then with the Sunne take Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Vntroubled night they say giues counsell best.
Right well Sir knight ye haue aduised bin,
(Quoth then that aged man;) the way to win
Is wisely to aduise: now day is spent;
Therefore with me ye may take vp your In
For this same night. The knight was well content:
So with that godly father to his home they went.

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In trauell to and froe: a little wyde
There was an holy Chappell edifyde,
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy things each morne and euentide:
Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

Arriued there, the little house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainment, where none was:
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will;
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the euening so they pas:
For that old man of pleasing wordes had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas;
He told of Saintes and Popes, and euermore
He strowd an *Aue-Mary* after and before.

The drouping Night thus creepeth on them fast,
And the sad humour loading their eye liddes,
As messenger of *Morpheus* on them cast
Sweet slo[m]bring deaw, the which to sleepe them
biddes.
Vnto their lodgings then his gwestes he riddes:
Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,
He to his study goes, and there amiddes
His Magick bookes and artes of sundry kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy
mindes

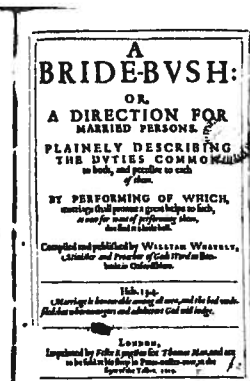
Then choosing out few wordes most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame,
With which and other spellles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke *Plutoes* griesly Dame,
And cursed heauen, and spake reprochfull shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light;
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great *Gorgon*, Prince of darknesse and dead night,
At which *Cocytus* quakes, and *Styx* is put to flight.

And forth he cald out of deepe darknesse dred
Legions of Sprights, the which like little flyes
Fluttring about his euer damned hed,
A-waite whereto their seruice he applies,
To aide his friends, or fray his enimies:
Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes;
The one of them he gaued a message too,
The other by him selfe staide other worke to doo.

Sermon on Marital Sex (1619)
by William Whately

Printed and sold by W. B. at the Sign of the Sunne in St. Dunstons Church-yard in London.

Printed and sold by W. B. at the Sign of the Sunne in St. Dunstons Church-yard in London.



And for the lesse principall duties of husband and wife concerning their ordinary society, thus much. I come now to such as concerne the marriage-bed, which are as needfull to bee knowne as the former, because offences in that kinde are more capitall and dangerous, though not so publique. Their matrimoniall meetings must have these three properties. First, it must be cheerefull: they must louingly, willingly and familiarly communicate themselues vnto themselues, which is the best means to continue and nourish their mutuall naturall loue, and by which the true and proper ends of matrimony shall bee attained in best manner: for the husband is not his owne, but the wifes, and the wife the husbands. Secondly, their meeting must bee sanctified. *Paul* saith, meate, drinke and marriage are good,

being sanctified by prayer. Men and women must not come together as brute creatures and vnreasonable beasts, through the heate of desire; but must see their Maker in that his ordinance, and craue his blessing solemnely as at meales, (the Apostle speakes of both alike) that marriage may indeede bee blessed vnto them. To sanctifie the marriage-bed, and vse it reuerently with prayer and thanks-giuing, will make it moderate, and keepe them from growing wearie each of other (as in many it falls out,) and cause that lust shall bee asswaged, which else shall bee increased by these meetings. Propagation and chastity, the two chiefe ends of marriage, are best attained by prayer and thanks-giuing in the vse thereof, without which they will hardly come, or not with comfort. Neither is it more then needs, to see God in that which so nearely toucheth our selues, as the hope of posterity: him, as the increase of his kingdome. Let Christians therefore know the fruite of prayer euen in all things. Thirdly, their nuptiall meetings must bee seasonable, and at lawfull times. There is a season when God and Nature seiounes man and wife in this respect. The woman is made to

be fruitfull; and therefore also more moist and cold of constitution. Hence it is that their naturall heate serues not to turne all their sustenance into their owne nourishment; but a quantity redounding is set apart in a conuenient place to chearish and nourish the conception, when they shall conceiue.

On Rushing into Marriage

And first, this ministers a good instruction to young and vnmarried people, that they doe not vnaduisedly rush into this estate. A thing of such difficulty should not bee lightly vndertaken. They shall haue their hands full of duty, if they get not their hearts full of grace, and their heads full of wisdom; they shall finde an house full of trouble, and a life full of woe, meeting with gall in stead of hony, and grauell in stead of nourishing morsels. Wouldst thou be married? See what wisdom, what patience, what grace fit to gouerne or fit to obey thou findest in thy selfe. Get these against thou come to vse them, or else marriage will not yeeld thee such contentment, as thine imagination promiseth. Vaine

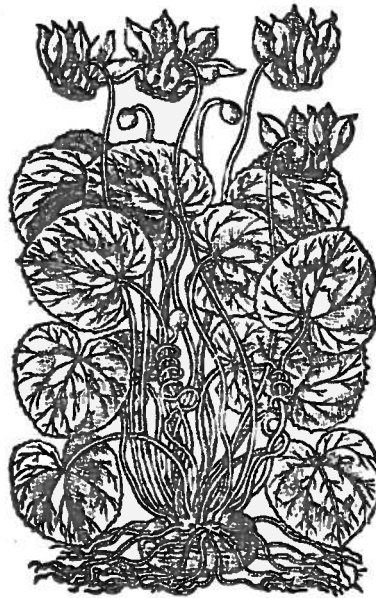
youths grow wanton and fall in lust, and must marry before they haue any power to practise, any vnderstanding to know their duties; so they trouble themselues, and discredit their estate both at once. He that leapes ouer a broad ditch with a short staffe, shall fall into the midst; and hee that enters vpon matrimony without care to attaine great grace, shalbe mired and doused in disquietment and vexation. Let vnmarried people thinke of this, and be wise.

Of Sowbready. Chap. 296.

* The kindes.

There be diuers sorts or kindes of Sowbready, differing very notably as well in forme or figure, as in their time of blowing, flourishing, fading, and appropriate vertues.

1 *Cyclamen orbiculato folio.*
Round Sowbready.



2 *Cyclamen folio Eritero.*
Lute Sowbready.



* The description.

The first being the common kinde of Sowbready, called in shops *Panis porcinus*, and *Arthanita*, hath many greene and round leaues like vnto *Asarabacca*, sauing that the vpper part of the leaues are mixed heere and there confusedly with white spots, and vnder the leaues next the ground of a purple colour: among which rise vp little stemes like vnto the stalkes of violets, beaung at the top small purple flowers which turne themselues backward (being full blownen) like a Turkes cap, or Tolepan, of a small sent or sauour, or none at all: which being past there succede little rounde knoppes or heades which containe slender browne feedes: these knops are wrapped after a few daies in the small stalkes, as thredde about a bottome, where it remaineth so defended from the iniurie of winter close vpon the ground, couered also with the greene leaues aforesaide, by which meanes it is kept from the frost, euen from the time of his seeding which is in September, vntill Iune; at what time the leaues do fade awaie, the stalkes and feede remaining bare and naked, whereby it enioyet the sunne (whereof it was long deprived) the sooner to bring them vnto maturitie: the roote is rounde like a Turnep, blacke without and white within, with many small stringes annexed thereunto.

2 The

The common kinde of Sow-bread, called in shops *Panis porcinus*, and *Arthanita*, hath many greene and round leaves...mixed here and there confusedly with white spots, and under the leaves next the ground of a purple colour: among which rise up little stemmes like unto the stalkes of violets...It is reported unto mee by men of good credit, the *Cyclamen* or Sow-bread growth upon the mountains of Wales; on the hills of Lincolnshire, and in Somersetshire. Being beaten and made up into trochisches, or little flat cakes, it is reported to be a good amorous medicine to make one in love, if it be inwardly taken.

A Letter of Advice Concerning Marriage (1676)

Printed for William Miller

To this eminent Duty the true Huswife dedicates her time and pains: her Children are her Garden, her Park, nay her Court. In their tender years her business is to protect them from disasters and injuries, to secure their health and growth, to observe their Genius, to instruct them in their best Capacities, yet rather leading than driving them, and supplying their defects with her skill and diligence; in all which her thrift is sutable to her tenderness. Her Sons she early resigns to their Father's Discipline, never interrupting it with pernicious fondness: In their riper years, she insensibly trains them to laudable Qualities. (yet for use not ostentation) her Lectures and Charms chiefly tending to the banishment of pride and sloth. Having thus seasoned them with Principles of Thrift and Content, she scrapes not for portions, nor is solicitous of their preferment, which she trusts may succeed to her wish, as commonly it doth; however she acquits and satisfies her self with this reasonable confidence, that if they prove not fortunate, they can scarce be miserable; which yet to our delicate and shiftless Dames frequently happens. But will our Shegallant now adays admit any such vulgar duty as the tendance of her Children; surely, that she leaves for Mechanicks, assigning the drudgery thereof to Hirelings, who accordingly perform it to treble Charge and Expence. as needless, as fruitless: she hears not their complaints or wants, much less sees them, but in their sad effects, incurable lameness or sickness, to the sudden expiring even of fruitful Families; no, the importance of her Dresses or Treatments affords not leisure for such trifles; or if to supererogate she mind them by fits, yet through her partiality or uneven Temper, such regard proves worse than neglect. On her Sons (especially the eldest) of course she dotes. underhand fomenting their stubbornness to the overthrow of whatsoever their Father with his Wisdom builds. In fine, her chief care is to cultivate their pride, the rankest Weed of our Nature, by good parents so industriously subdued: To her own Idea she frames them, for indeed better Principles or Manners than she hath how should she infuse? so that people in the Streets scarce forbear to proclame them Chips of the old Block; and at last in despite of their Falther's provision, 'tis great odds, they marry either to his disparagement or their Husbands undoing.

By the said William Miller you may be furnished with most sorts of bound or stitch'd Books; as Acts of Parliament, Proclamations, Speeches, Declarations, Letters, Orders, Commissions, Articles, with other State Matters; likewise Books of Divinity, Church-government, Sermons, and most sorts of Histories, Poetry, Plays and such like; as also Tickets for Funerals ready fitted.

FINIS.

Solemnization of Matrimony *Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer (1559)*

For the banns must be asked three several Sundays or holydays, in the time of service, the people being present after the accustomed manner.

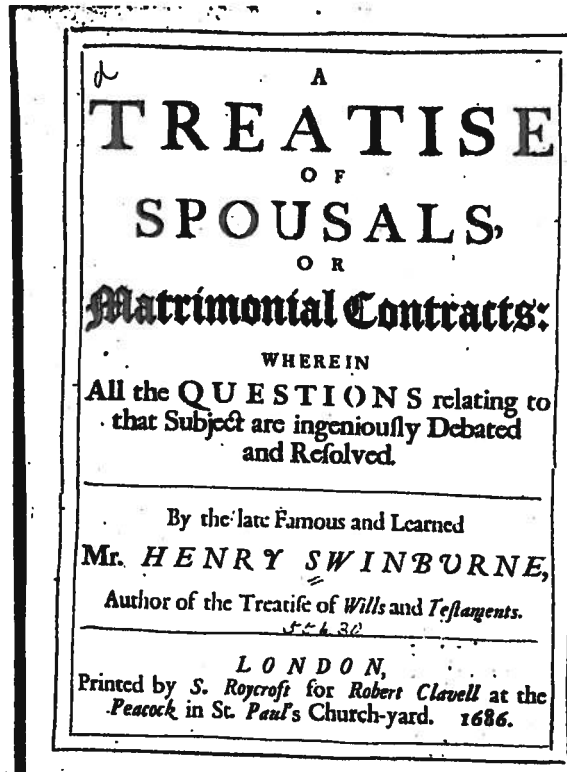
And if the persons that would be married dwell in divers parishes, the banns must be asked in both parishes, and the Curate of the one parish shall not solemnize Matrimony betwixt them without a certificate of the banns being thrice asked from the Curate of the other parish. At the day appointed for solemnization of Matrimony, the persons to be married shall come into the body of the church with their friends and neighbours. And there the priest shall thus say.

Dearly beloved friends, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of his congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in paradise, in the time of man's innocency; signifying unto us the mystical union, that is betwixt Christ and his church: which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee, and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men and therefore is not to be enterprised, nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, lightly or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, which matrimony was ordained. One was, the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and praise of God. Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as have not the gift of continency, might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body. Thirdly, for the mutual society, help and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity: into the which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any man can shew any just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak: or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

Liturgical Services and Occasional forms of Prayer Set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, Ed. William Keatinge Clay (Cambridge, 1847) 217-24. The First Prayer Book of Edward VI was published in 1548. Act of Uniformity enforced its use in 1549. Revised in 1552 under reign of Mary Tudor and revived as Elizabethan Book of Prayer in 1559.

SECTION IX. OF RIPE or LAWFUL AGE for MARRIAGE.

1. The third age *ripe age*, that is it is lawful not spousals, but also perfect, and matrimony, and become husband
2. Understand so soon as he age of *fourteen* soon as she hath of twelve years, lawful and in case there be to hinder the that of discern betwixt is for their profit to have natural perform the duty respect are



now to be considered is to say, that age wherein only to contract to solemnize true, indissoluble thereby effectually to and wife... therefore, That a man hath accomplished the years, and a woman so accomplished the age may contract true and individual matrimony, no other impediment same: The reason is, discretion, and able to good and evil, and what and disprofit; but also and corporal ability to of marriage, and in that termed *puberes* as it

were plants, now sending forth buds and flowers, apparent testimonies of inward sap, and immediate messengers of approaching fruit...

3. But what may be the reason wherefore women are sooner ripe than men?...Because the female bodies are more *tender* and *moister* than the *male*: And so men's bodies being harder and drier, they are more slow in ripening:...
1. The second amplification is, that albeit he that hath accomplished the age of fourteen years...be not then *able to pay* the debt which he oweth to his wife,...the matrimony is not therefore by and by to be adjudged void, ...until he hath over-reached the *eighteenth* year of his age,...the marriage may be dissolved...unless the judge...shall grant a longer time.

SECTION XIV. OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPOUSALS.

2. First, whether such secret contracts be good in law, yea, or no? And it seemeth they are not good...But the law doth forbid all persons to make *secret* contracts of spousals, or matrimony...Wherefore seeing secret contracts cannot be proved, it is all one in effect, as if they were not.

NOTES

¹For example, Ann Jennalie Cook, who in one article notes the basic facts about age at marriage in Renaissance England and then spends two pages taking a brief look at the implication of these facts for *Romeo and Juliet* (127-29).

²Laslett presents the data in the form of a chart, which I reproduce here:

Table 1.2: Mean age at first marriage in England by fifty-year periods, 1550-1849.

	Females		Males	
	1550-99	1600-1649	1550-99	1600-1649
1 Alcester (Warws.)	22.4	25.0	24.5	29.1
2 Aldenham (Herts.)	22.0	25.3	28.6	29.1
3 Banbury (Oxon)	24.9	25.4	26.0	27.2
4 Bottesford (Leics.)	21.9	25.9	30.3	29.2
5 Campton & Shefford (Beds.)	24.7	25.5	28.8	28.0
6 Colyton (Devon)	26.9	27.3	27.8	27.4
7 Earsden (Northumb.)	---	---	---	---
8 Gainsborough (Lincs.)	22.1	25.0	24.0	27.0
9 Gedling (Notts.)	23.5	27.2	29.6	29.3
10 Hartland (Devon)	23.7	27.8	27.9	28.8
11 Hawkshead (Lancs.)	---	24.8	---	27.8
12 Methley (Yorks.)	25.2	25.7	24.9	29.9
13 Shepshed (Leics.)	27.5	28.8	29.7	29.9
14 Terling (Essex)	24.5	24.6	26.0	25.1
15 Willingham (Cambs.)	22.5	24.8	25.1	26.7
Median	23.7	24.5	27.8	28.1
Mean (unweighted)	24.0	25.9	27.2	28.2

Data: from family reconstitutions, Cambridge Group.

See also Laslett, *Family Life* 29, 218; and Houlbrooke, *English Family* 63. (Houlbrooke gives 26 as the mean age of marriage for women, 27 to 29 as the mean age for men, in Elizabethan and Stuart England.) The average age of marriage was somewhat lower for the aristocracy of Renaissance England than for other classes (Laslett, *World* 86, 285; Houlbrooke, *English Family* 65, 128). But it was still in the twenties (about 19 to 21 for women, 24 to 26 for men), a good deal above the ages of *Romeo and Juliet*.

³See, for instance, Mack 9-10, 17-18; Gibbons 38; Praz 99-100, 102-03; Einstein 371.

⁴On clandestine marriages in Renaissance England, see Gouge 203; Furnivall xliv, lxii, 65-67, 140-41; and Houlbrooke, *English Family* 86. On Donne's marriage,

Letter to Sir George More

Sir,

If a very respective fear of your displeasure, and a doubt that my lord (whom I know out of your worthiness to love you much) would be so compassionate with you as to add his anger to yours, did not so much increase my sickness as that I cannot stir, I had taken the boldness to have done the office of this letter by waiting upon you myself, to have given you truth and clearness of this matter between your daughter and me, and to show to you plainly the limits of our fault, by which I know your wisdom will proportion the punishment. So long since as her being at York House, this had foundation, and so much then of promise and contract built upon it, as without violence to conscience might not be shaken. At her lying in town this last Parliament, I found means to see her twice or thrice. We both knew the obligations that lay upon us, and we adventured equally; and about three weeks before Christmas we married...The reasons I did not fore-acquaint you with it were these. I knew my present estate less than fit for her. I knew I stood not right in your opinion. I knew that to have given any intimation of it had been to impossibilitate the whole matter...Sir, I acknowledge my fault to be so great as I dare scarce offer any other prayer to you in mine own behalf...I acknowledge my fault to be so great as I dare scarce offer any other prayer to you in mine own behalf...I humbly beg of you that she may not to her danger feel the terror of your sudden anger. I know this letter shall find you full of passion, but I know no passion can alter your reason or wisdom...if you incense my Lord, you destroy her and me; that it is easy to give us happiness...For my excuse I can say nothing, except I knew what were said to you. Sir, I have truly told you this matter, and I humbly beseech you so to deal in it...and to accept the vows of one whom you may now raise or scatter...and to show my humble obedience to yourself.

Yours in all duty and humbleness,

J. Donne

From my lodgings by the Savoy,

2 February, 1602

To the Right Worshipful Sir George More, Kt.*

*Knight

Scholarly Article: "Romeo and Juliet" from *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997): 870.
by Stephen Greenblatt

A much deeper social principle is figured in Friar Laurence, who embodies the collective wisdom and sanctity of the community. Though set apart the friar is not a hermit or a recluse; he is an active agent in the community's affairs. His attempt to use Romeo and Juliet's love as a means to resolve the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets disastrously backfires, and with his sleeping potions, his elaborate plots, and, at the close,



his fatal cowardice, he has some of the qualities of the stereotypical meddling friar of anticlerical satire. But Friar Laurence is a more complex figure, with a subtle grasp of the doubleness – both poison and medicine – of the natural world and a

thoughtful advocacy of moderation. This advocacy draws on an ancient and powerful critique of extremes in passion, which the play's tragic outcome would seem to endorse.

Yet few readers or spectators come away from *Romeo and Juliet* with the conviction that it would be better to love moderately. The intensity of the lovers' passion seems to have its own compelling, self-justifying force, which quietly brushes away all social obstacles and moralizing warnings...and language of love...has after four hundred years an unforgettable freshness:

Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-browed night,
Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun. (3.2.20-25)

Romeo and Juliet offers us the consoling realization the lovers themselves have all along been in love with night.

**THE TRAGICALL HISTORY OF
ROMEO AND JULIET
Arthur Brooke 1562**

*THE TRAGICALL HIS-
TORYE OF ROMEOUS AND IULIET, writ-
ten first in Italian by Bandell,
and nowe in English by
Ar. Br.*

Neu by violent durturmy

The Balcony Scene

490

With whispering voice, y-broke with sobs, thus is her tale begun:
"O Romeus, of your life too lavas sure you are,
That in this place, and at this time, to hazardit you dare.
What if your deadly foes, my kinsmen, saw you here?
Like lions wild, your tender parts asunder would they tear.
In ruth and in disdain, I, weary of my life,
With cruel hand my mourning heart would pierce with bloody knife.
For you, mine own, once dead, what joy should I have here?
And eke my honour stained, which I than life do hold more dear."
"Fair lady mine, dame Juliet, my life," quod he,

500

"Even from my birth committed was to fatal sisters three.
They may in spite of foes draw forth my lively thread;
And they also, whoso saith nay, asunder may it shred.
But who to reave my life, his rage and force would bend,
Perhaps should try unto his pain how I it could defend.
Ne yet I love it so, but always for your sake.
A sacrifice to death I would my wounded corpse betake.
If my mishap were such, that here before your sight,
I should restore again to death, of life, my borrowed light,

510

That part he should before that you by certain trial knew
The love I owe to you, the thrall I languish in,
And how I dread to lose the gain which I do hope to win;
And how I wish for life, not for my proper ease,
But that in it you might I love, you honour, serve and please,
Till deadly pangs the sprite out of the corpse shall send."
And thereupon he sware an oath, and so his tale had end.
Now love and pity boil in Juliet's ruthless breast:
In window on her leaning arm her weary head doth rest;
Her bosom bathed in tears, to witness inward pain,

520

With dreary cheer to Romeus thus answered she again:
"Ah, my dear Romeus, keep in these words," quod she,
For lo, the thought of such mischance already maketh me
For pity and for dread well-nigh to yield up breath;
In even balance peised are my life and eke my death.
For so my heart is knit, yea, made one self with yours,
That sure there is no grief so small, by which your mind endures,
But as you suffer pain, so I do bear in part,
Although it lessens not your grief, the half of all your smart.
But these things overpast if of your health and mine.

**ROMEO AND JULIET
William Shakespeare 1595**

The Balcony Scene

JULIET

How camest thou hither, tell me, and
wherefore? / The orchard walls are high and
hard to climb, / And the place death,
considering who thou art, / If any of my
kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO

With love's light wings did I o'erperch these
walls, / For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do, that dares love
attempt; / Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop
to me...

Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords. Look thou but
sweet, / and I am proof against their
enmity...

I have night's cloak to hide me from their
eyes; / and but thou love me, let them find me
here. / My life were better ended by their
hate / Than death prorogued, wanting of thy
love...

By love, that first did prompt me to inquire.
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore washed with the farthest
sea, / I should adventure for such
merchandise.

JULIET

...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, / ...O gentle Romeo,
If thou thinkest I am too quickly won, I'll
frown and be perverse and say thee nay...But
trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be