

~~reason but because thou hast hazel eyes. What eye but such an eye  
would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as  
an egg is full of meat, and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle  
as an egg for quarrelling. Thou hast quarrelled with a man for  
coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath  
lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for  
wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another for tying his  
new shoes with old riband? and yet thou wilt tutor me from  
quarrelling?~~ 20 25

~~BENVOLIO And I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should  
buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.~~

~~MERCUTIO The fee-simple? O simple!~~

~~*Enter TYBALT, PETRUCHIO, and others.*~~

BENVOLIO By my head, here comes the Capulets. **START** 30

MERCUTIO By my heel, I care not.

TYBALT Follow me close, for I will speak to them.

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. 35

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

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 40

19-21 Thy...quarrelling.] *not in* Q1 25 from] Q2-4, F; of Q1; for Q5, *Pope* 27-9 And...simple!] *not in* Q1  
29 fee-simple?] F; fee-simple, Q2-4 29 SD] Q2-4, F; *Enter Tybalt. Q1 (after 30); Enter Tybalt, and others. / Hammer*  
30 comes the Capulets] Q2-4, F; comes a *Capolet* Q1; come the *Capulettes* F2 34 us?] Q3-4, F, Q1; vs, Q2 39 consortest]  
Q2-4; consort'st F; consorts Q1 39 Romeo.] Q2-4, F; *Romeo?* Q1; *Romeo - /Rowe* 40 Consort? ] F; Consort, Q2-4;  
Consort *Zwounes* consort? Q1 40 dost] Q3-4, F; doest Q2

20 meat edible substance (yolk and white).

20-1 addle... for as muddled and worthless as  
a bad egg as a result of; compare 'addle-pated'.

24 his new doublet i.e. the new jacket he has  
just created. NS suggests that the tailor was  
advertising his new line in advance of Easter when  
'lenten' wear was abandoned.

24-5 his new shoes i.e. the new shoes supplied  
by him (NS).

25 riband ribbon (variant form). Ribbons were  
used as shoelaces.

25 tutor me from warn me against (as a tutor  
might warn his pupil).

27 apt prone.

27-8 any...quarter i.e. it would be a bargain  
for me to sell all rights to my life ('fee-  
simple' = absolute possession) to anyone who  
would buy them for as little as an hour and a

quarter, since I would expect to be dead before the  
time was up.

29 simple weak-minded, stupid (with perhaps  
some play on 'simple' = absolute).

29 SD PETRUCHIO Presumably the 'young  
Petruccio' mentioned by the Nurse in 1.5.130; he  
has no lines.

31 By my heel Derogatory, as the extreme  
opposite of the head.

35 word...blow Proverbial (Tilley w763; 'He  
is but a word and a blow', and w824).

37 occasion excuse.

38 Could...giving? Mercutio is presumably  
annoyed by Tybalt's insistence on punctilio.  
'without giving' = without its having been offered.

40 Consort? Mercutio intentionally misinter-  
prets Tybalt's 'consortest' (= keepest company  
with) to mean 'performest musically with' as a

make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords. Here's my fiddlestick, here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

BENVOLIO We talk here in the public haunt of men:

Either withdraw unto some private place,

Or reason coldly of your grievances,

45

Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

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.

50

~~Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower;~~

~~Your worship in that sense may call him man.~~

TYBALT Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford

No better term than this: thou art a villain.

ROMEO Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee

55

Doth much excuse the appertaining rage

To such a greeting. Villain am I none;

Therefore farewell, I see thou knowest me not.

TYBALT Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries

That thou hast done me, therefore turn and draw.

60

ROMEO I do protest I never injured thee,

But love thee better than thou canst devise,

Till thou shalt know the reason of my love;

42 'Zounds' Q2-4 (zounds); Come F; see 40 above for Q1 43-8 ] not in Q1 45 Or] Q2-4, F; And Capell 45-6 grievances, ... depart.] F4 (comma also in Q5); grieuances: depart, Q2-4, F 53 love] Q2-4, F; hate Q1, Pope 58 knowest] Q2-3; know'st Q4, F, Q1 61 injured] Q2; iniured Q3-4, Q1; iniur'd F 62 love] Q2-4, Q1; lou'd F 62 thou] Q3-4, F, Q1; thon Q2 62 devise,] Q1, Q5; deuisse: Q2-3, F; deuisse. Q4

member of a 'consort' or troupe of professional musicians or 'minstrels' (= fiddlers, etc.) - an insult to a gentleman. Compare 'give you the minstrel' in 4.5.110-11.

42 fiddlestick i.e. rapier (to which he points).

42 'Zounds A corruption of 'By God's (= Christ's) wounds'.

45 reason coldly of discuss dispassionately.

46 depart go your separate ways.

50 wear your livery Mercutio again quibbles with Tybalt, taking 'my man' (49) to mean 'my servant', one who would properly wear Tybalt's 'livery' (= uniform or heraldic badge). Compare similar play in 51 on 'follower' (= (1) one who accepts a challenge; (2) an attendant servant).

51 go...field lead the way to the place of combat (i.e. set an example).

53 love Surprisingly ironic coming from the forthright Tybalt. Some eds. prefer Q1 'hate'.

54 villain A very serious insult demanding reprisal, carrying not only the sense of 'depraved scoundrel' but undertones of 'low-born fellow' (= villain); compare 86.

55-8, 61-5 Compare Brooke (999-1002, 1011-15); Painter (p. 112), however, seems much closer in tone and feeling to Shakespeare. See supplementary note.

56 appertaining appropriate (to a member of the Capulet family).

59 Boy A term of contempt; compare Brooke (1016) and Cor. 5.6.100-16.

61 injured injured (variant form from 'to injury').

And so, good Capulet, which name I tender  
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.

65

MERCUTIO O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!

‘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

70

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.

TYBALT I am for you. [*Drawing.*]

75

ROMEO Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

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

80

Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.

[*Romeo steps between them.*] END

64-5 ] not in Q1 65 mine] Q2; my Q3-4, F 67 ‘Alla stoccata’] Knight; *Alla stucatho* Q2-4, F; *Allastockado* Q1; *Ah! la Stoccata / Theobald; Ha! la stocasto / Hammer; A la stoccato / Capell; Allo steccato / Hoppe; Alla stoccattho / Hosley; Alla stoccato / Riverside* 67 SD] *Capell*; no SD, Q2-4, F, Q1 69 wouldst] Q2; woulds Q3-4, F; wouldest Q1 70-82 Good...hurt.] Q2-4, F; Nothing King of Cates, but borrow one of your nine lives, therefore come drawe your rapier out of your scabard, least mine be about your eares ere you be a ware. / *Rom*: Stay Tybalt, hould Mercutio: Benuolio beate downe their weapons. Q1 71 me hereafter,] *Pope*; mee hereafter Q2-4, F; me, hereafter *Rowe* 72 dry-beat] *Rowe*; drie beate Q2-4, F 73 pilcher] Q2-4, F; scabard Q1; pilche *Warburton*; pitcher *Singer*<sup>2</sup>; pilch, sir, conj. *Staunton* 75 SD] *Rowe*; no SD, Q2-4, F, Q1 77 SD] *Rowe* (subst.); no SD, Q2-4, F, Q1 81 Forbid this] Q2; Forbid Q3-4; Forbidden F 81 SD] *Riverside* (from *Douai MS.*); no SD, Q2-4, F, Q1; *striving to part them.* / *Capell* (after 79)

64 tender value, hold in regard.

67 ‘Alla stoccata’ Literally ‘at the thrust’, an Italian fencing term of the kind Mercutio despises; here used as a nickname for Tybalt (Cowden Clarke) and implying, with ‘carries it away’ (= wins the day), that his verbal onslaught has apparently unarmed Romeo (Kermode).

68 rat-catcher i.e. ‘King of Cats’ (70). Compare 2.4.18, and Nashe, *Saffron-Walden* (*Works*, III, 67).

71 withal with.

71-2 as...dry-beat depending on your future behaviour to me, thrash or cudgel (‘dry-beat’ properly means ‘to beat without drawing blood’ but was vaguely used to mean ‘beat hard’ (*OED*)). Mercutio suggests that another time he will not accord Tybalt the honour of armed combat proper to a gentleman, but will thrash him with his bare hands as one would a servant.

73 pilcher Contemptuous term for ‘scabbard’ (the reading of Q1), from ‘pilch’ = a leather jacket, though ‘pilcher’ is otherwise unrecorded in this sense. Scabbards were commonly made of leather reinforced with metal. Perhaps Mercutio is sneering at a mere leather scabbard as compared with more costly ones (such as his?) wholly of metal. NS proposes that ‘pluck...ears’ (72-3) ‘suggests a reluctant sword’ – an insult to Tybalt as its wearer.

75 I...you i.e. I accept the challenge.

77 Come...‘passado’ ‘Come, sir, show your thrust that you are so fond of talking about’ (Kittredge). Compare 2.4.23.

81 bandying contention, strife (literally, ‘exchange of strokes’).