

Romeo's Speech Before Taking the Poison, from four versions of *Romeo and Juliet*

Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Gounod's <i>Roméo and Juliette</i> (translated from French in Shakespearean style)	Bellini's <i>I Capuleti e I Montecchi</i> (not based on Shakespeare)
<p>O my love! my wife! Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath, Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty: Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks, And death's pale flag is not advanced there. Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet? O, what more favour can I do to thee, Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain To sunder his that was thine enemy? Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet, Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe That unsubstantial death is amorous, And that the lean abhorred monster keeps Thee here in dark to be his paramour? For fear of that, I still will stay with thee; And never from this palace of dim night Depart again: here, here will I remain With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here Will I set up my everlasting rest, And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last! Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss A dateless bargain to engrossing death! Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide! Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark! Here's to my love! <i>(Drinks poison.)</i></p>	<p>Oh my love! My wife! Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath, Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty. Thy beauty, calm and pure, seems to reign in eternity.</p> <p>Ah, why art thou yet so fair? Is it to swiftly draw me to thine embrace? This is the happiness my heart doth seek, And thy prey, oh death, this day shall I be. Death! I gaze upon thee without fear,</p> <p>For here with my love, I shall remain.</p> <p>Arms, take your last embrace! And lips -- seal with a kiss a bargain to engrossing death!</p> <p>To my love! <i>(Drinks poison. Juliet begins to wake)</i></p>	<p><i>Tu sola, o mia Giulietta, m'odi tu sola. ~ Ahi vana speme!... è sorda la fredda salma di mia voce al suono... deserto in terra, abbandonato io sono.</i></p> <p><i>Deh! Tu, bell'anima, che al ciel ascendi, A me rivolgiti, Con te mi prendi: Così scordami, così lasciarmi non puoi, Bell'anima, nel mio dolore.</i></p> <p><i>O tu, mi sola speme, tosco fatal, Non mai da me diviso, vieni al mio labbro. (si avvelena) Raccogliete voi l'ultimo mio sospiro, Tombe de'miei nemici.</i></p> <p>You alone, O my Juliet, hear me. Ah, vain hope! Her cold corpse is deaf to the sound of my voice. Deserted on the earth, I am abandoned.</p> <p>Ah, you, fair soul, who ascend to heaven, Look back at me, take me with you. You cannot forget me, cannot leave me thus, Fair soul, in my grief.</p> <p>O you, my only hope, fatal poison, never Parted from me, come to my lips. <i>(Drinks the poison.)</i> Receive my last sighs, O tombs of my enemies.</p> <p><i>(Juliet, awakening from the tomb): "Ah!"</i></p>

Bandello's *Of the sad end of two hapless lovers, one dying of poison, and the other of grief; together with sundry events.*
(the likely source for Bellini and Shakespeare)

So [Romeo] set out for Verona, travelling at great speed, and got there at the hour of the *Ave Maria*. He at once went to look for Pietro, who was at home, and had done all that he had been told to do. About the fourth hour of the night they both started for San Francesco, taking all necessary tools with them, and on reaching Giulietta's tomb they adroitly opened it and propped up the lid. Romeo had told Pietro to bring a dark lantern with him, which helped them not a little in their work. Entering the tomb, Romeo saw his darling wife lying there, to all appearance cold and dead. At the sight he swooned, and sank down at her side overcome with grief. Then, recovering himself, he tenderly kissed and embraced her, bathing her face with scalding tears, as sobs choked his utterance. But after a long spell of weeping he found his voice, and spoke words that must have touched the hardest of hard hearts to pity.

As he had resolved to be quit of life, he took the phial containing the poison, and putting it to his lips drained it at one draught.

From Pinkerton, Percy. *Matteo Bandello: Twelve Stories Selected and Done into English with a Memoir of the Author*. London: John C. Nimmo, 1895.