

ACT 1, SCENE 3  
**NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE**

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LADY CAPULET *and the NURSE enter.*

LADY CAPULET

Nurse, where's my daughter? Tell her to come to me.

NURSE

I swear to you by my virginity at age twelve, I already told her to come. Come on! Where is she? What is she doing? What, Juliet!

JULIET *enters.*

JULIET

What is it? Who's calling me?

NURSE

Your mother.

JULIET

Madam, I'm here. What do you want?

LADY CAPULET

I'll tell you what's the matter—Nurse, leave us alone for a little while. We must talk privately—Nurse, come back here. I just remembered, you can listen to our secrets. You know how young my daughter is.

NURSE

Yes, I know her age down to the hour.

LADY CAPULET

She's not even fourteen.

NURSE

I'd bet fourteen of my own teeth—but, I'm sorry to say, I only have four teeth—she's not fourteen. How long is it until Lammastide?

→ Lammastide =  
August 1.

LADY CAPULET

Two weeks and a few odd days.

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**NURSE**

Whether it's even or odd, of all the days in the year, on the night of Lammas Eve, she'll be fourteen. She and Susan—God rest her and all Christian souls—were born on the same day. Well, Susan died and is with God. She was too good for me. But like I said, on the night of Lammas Eve, she will be fourteen. Yes, she will. Indeed, I remember it well. It's been eleven years since the earthquake. She stopped nursing from my breast on that very day. I'll never forget it. I had put bitter wormwood on my breast as I was sitting in the sun, under the wall of the dovehouse. You and your husband were in Mantua. Boy, do I have some memory! But like I said, when she tasted the bitter wormwood on my nipple, the pretty little babe got irritated and started to quarrel with my breast. Then the dovehouse shook with the earthquake. There was no need to tell me to get out of there. That was eleven years ago. By then she could stand up all by herself. No, I swear, by that time she could run and waddle all around. I remember because she had cut her forehead just the day before. My husband—God rest his soul, he was a happy man—picked up the child. "Oh," he said, "Did you fall on your face? You'll fall backward when you grow smarter. Won't you, Jule." And I swear, the poor pretty thing stopped crying and said, "Yes." Oh, to watch a joke come true! I bet if I live a thousand years, I'll never forget it. "Won't you, Jule," he said. And the pretty fool stopped crying and said, "Yes."

→ "Fall backward" =  
have sex.

**LADY CAPULET**

Enough of this. Please be quiet.

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**NURSE**

Yes, madam. But I can't help laughing to think that the baby stopped crying and said, "Yes." I swear, she had a bump on her forehead as big as a rooster's testicle. It was a painful bruise, and she was crying bitterly. "Yes," said my husband, "Did you fall on your face? You'll fall backward when you grow up, won't you, Jule?" And she stopped crying and said, "Yes."

**JULIET**

Now you stop too, Nurse, please.

**NURSE**

Peace. I'm done talking. May God choose you to receive his grace. You were the prettiest baby I ever nursed. If I live to see you get married someday, all my wishes will come true.

**LADY CAPULET**

Well, marriage is exactly what we have to discuss. Tell me, my daughter Juliet, what is your attitude about getting married?

**JULIET**

It is an honor that I do not dream of.

**NURSE**

"An honor?" If I weren't your only nurse, I'd say you had sucked wisdom from the breast that fed you.

**LADY CAPULET**

Well, start thinking about marriage now. Here in Verona there are girls younger than you—girls from noble families—who have already become mothers. By my count, I was already your mother at just about your age, while you remain a virgin. Well then, I'll say this quickly: the valiant Paris wants you as his bride.

**NURSE**

What a man, young lady. He's as great a man as any in the whole world. He's as perfect as if he were sculpted from wax.

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LADY CAPULET

Summertime in Verona has no flower as fine as him.

NURSE

No, he's a fine flower, truly, a flower.

LADY CAPULET

*(to JULIET)* What do you say? Can you love this gentleman? Tonight you'll see him at our feast. Study Paris's face and find pleasure in his beauty. Examine every line of his features and see how they work together to make him handsome. If you are confused, just look into his eyes. This man is single, and he lacks only a bride to make him perfect and complete. As is right, fish live in the sea, and it's wrong for a beauty like you to hide from a handsome man like him. Many people think he's handsome, and whoever becomes his bride will be just as admired. You would share all that he possesses, and by having him, you would lose nothing.

NURSE

Lose nothing? In fact, you'd get bigger. Men make women bigger by getting them pregnant.

LADY CAPULET

*(to JULIET)* Give us a quick answer. Can you accept Paris's love?

JULIET

I'll look at him and try to like him, at least if what I see is likable. But I won't let myself fall for him any more than your permission allows.

PETER *enters.*