MERCUTIO

Why were you late?

TYBALT

*(meaning his footwork)* I’m perfectly in time.

MERCUTIO

*(meaning earlier)* Why were you late?

TYBALT

Because I failed to arrive on time.

*(MERCUTIO breaks the sequence, coming to a stop)*

MERCUTIO

Victor’s request: tell me why you were late.

TYBALT

You only won on a technicality.

MERCUTIO

You breathe technicalities.

TYBALT

You’ll be angry if I tell you.

MERCUTIO

I will not.

*(MERCUTIO holds out a hand. TYBALT hesitates, remembering the last time he took MERCUTIO’s hand. Then he takes it, and they shake. It means a promise.)*

TYBALT

There was a brawl, started by servants, two of house Capulet and two of Montague.

MERCUTIO

And you, all fire and steel, joined the fray? No surprise there.

TYBALT

I fought that villain, Benvolio.

MERCUTIO

That villain is my dearest friend.

TYBALT

After Romeo.

MERCUTIO

Yes. And I’ll not hear you speak ill of either.

TYBALT

Not even if I have cause?

MERCUTIO

No. We agreed, Tybalt, no talk of Capulets and Montagues here.

TYBALT

We’re in my uncle’s orchard.

MERCUTIO

We have to forget that. It’s the only way this works.

TYBALT

You asked so I told.

MERCUTIO

Next time, lie.

TYBALT

You’ve shrunk your world too small, Mercutio.

MERCUTIO

*(walking to put down his foil and get his sword)* I should go.

TYBALT

You promised you wouldn’t be angry.