

Act 2, Scene 2, Romeo and Juliet, Shakespear

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound. But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, ⁵Who is already sick and pale with grief, That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she. Be not her maid since she is envious. Her vestal livery is but sick and green, And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off! ¹⁰It is my lady. Oh, it is my love. Oh, that she knew she were! She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that? Her eye discourses. I will answer it.—I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks. ¹⁵Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, Having some business, do entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres till they return. What if her eyes were there, they in her head? The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars ²⁰As daylight doth a lamp. Her eye in heaven Would through the airy region stream so bright That birds would sing and think it were not night. See how she leans her cheek upon her hand. Oh, that I were a glove upon that hand ²⁵That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET enters on the balcony.

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

[Aside] She speaks. O, speak again, bright angel! For thou art as glorious to this night, being o'er my head, ³⁰As is a wingèd messenger of heaven Unto the white, upturnèd, wondering eyes Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him When he bestrides the lazy-puffing clouds And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name. Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy. Thou art thyself, though not a Montague. What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part Belonging to a man. O, be some other name! ⁴⁵What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other word would smell as sweet. So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called, Retain that dear perfection which he owes Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name, ⁵⁰And for that name, which is no part of thee Take all myself.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word. Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized. Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET

What man art thou that, thus bescreened in night, So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO

By a name I know not how to tell thee who I am. My name,

ROMEO

He jokes about scars from wounds he's never felt. But wait! What light is that in the window over there? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Rise, beautiful sun, and kill the jealous moon, which is already sick and pale with grief because Juliet, her maid, is more beautiful than she is. Don't be her maid, since she's jealous. The moon's virginity makes her look sick and green, and only fools hold on to their virginity. Throw it off. It is my lady. Oh, it is my love. Oh, I wish she knew I loved her. She's talking, but isn't saying anything. Why is that? Her eyes are speaking. I'll respond—no, I am too bold. It's not to me she speaks. Two of the most beautiful stars in the sky had to go off on some business, and begged her eyes to twinkle in their place until they return. If her eyes were in the sky and the stars were in her head the brightness of her cheeks would overwhelm the stars, just as daylight outshines a lamp. And her eyes in the night sky would shine so brightly that birds would start singing, thinking it was day. Look how she leans her cheek against her hand. I wish I were a glove on that hand, so I could touch her cheek.

JULIET enters on the balcony.

JULIET

Oh, my!

ROMEO

[To himself] She speaks. Speak again, bright angel. For tonight you are as glorious as an angel, shining above my head like a winged messenger from heaven; one who makes mortals fall onto their backs to gaze up in awe as the angel strides across the clouds and sails through the air.

JULIET

Oh, Romeo, Romeo, why must you be Romeo? Deny your father and give up your name. Or, if you won't change your name, just swear your love to me and I'll give up being a Capulet.

ROMEO

[To himself] Should I listen longer, or respond now to these words?

JULIET

Only your name is my enemy. You'd be yourself even if you ceased to be a Montague. What's a Montague, after all? It's not a hand, foot, arm, face, or any other body part. Oh, change your name! What's the significance of a name? The thing we call a rose would smell as sweet even if we called it by some other name. So even if Romeo had some other name, he would still be perfect. Romeo, take off your name—which really has no connection to who you are—and take all of me instead.

ROMEO

[To JULIET] I take you at your word. If you call me your love, I'll take a new name. From now on I'll never again be Romeo.

JULIET

Who are you, hiding in the darkness and eavesdropping on my private thoughts?

ROMEO

I don't know how to tell you who I am by using a name dear

saint, is hateful to myself Because it is an enemy to thee. Had it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

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.

JULIET

If they do see thee they will murder thee.

ROMEO

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

JULIET

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO

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.

JULIET

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO

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 would adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.
Fain would I dwell on form. Fain, fain deny
What I have spoke. But farewell compliment!
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,
They say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo. But else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light.
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true

Than those that have more coying to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was 'ware,
My true love's passion. Therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

I hate my name, dear saint, because it is your enemy. If I had it written down, I would tear up the word.

JULIET

I haven't even heard you say a hundred words yet, but I do recognize the sound of your voice. Aren't you Romeo, the Montague?

ROMEO

Beautiful girl, I'll be neither of those things, if you dislike them.

JULIET

How and why did you come here? The orchard walls are high and difficult to climb. And it will mean your death, because of who you are, if any of my family members find you here.

ROMEO

I flew over these walls on the wings of love. No stone wall can keep love out. Whatever a man in love can do, love will make him attempt to do it. Therefore your relatives can't stop me.

JULIET

If they see you they'll murder you.

ROMEO

Alas, there would be more danger for me in one angry look from you than there would be from twenty of your relatives with swords. If you just look at me with love, their hatred would not be able to touch me.

JULIET

I'd give the world to make sure they do not see you here.

ROMEO

The darkness of night will hide me from their eyes. And if you don't love me, then let them find me. I'd rather they killed me in hatred than experience the prolonged death of life without your love.

JULIET

Who told you how to find my my bedroom?

ROMEO

Love, which spurred me to come and find you. Love advised me, while I lent love my eyes. I'm not a sailor. Still, even if you were on the shore across the farthest sea, I would set out to find you.

JULIET

The darkness of night masks my face, or else you'd see me blushing about the things you heard me say tonight. I would gladly stick to the proper manners of courtship and deny everything I said. But, instead: I'll say goodbye to good manners! Do you love me? I know you will answer "yes," and I will trust you. But your swears may turn out to be false. They say that [Jove](#) laughs when lovers lie. Oh, noble Romeo, if you really love me, say it in truth. Or if you think I'm letting myself be won too easily, then I'll frown and act superior and unapproachable so that you'll woo me. But if that's not necessary, then I would never act that way. In truth, beautiful Montague, I like you too much, which might make it seem as if I am overly silly and flirtatious. But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove to be more faithful than girls who act coy and standoffish. I probably should have acted more standoffish, I confess, but you overheard me talking about my passion for you before I knew you were there. So please forgive me, and don't condemn me for so quickly falling in love when it was only revealed to you because the dark night let you discover it.

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I vow, That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon, That monthly changes in her circle orb, Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all. Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self, Which is the god of my idolatry, And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love—

JULIET

Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee, I have no joy of this contract tonight. It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden, Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be Ere one can say "It lightens." Sweet, good night. This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath, May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet. Good night, good night! As sweet repose and rest Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

ROMEO

Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it, And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO

Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

JULIET

But to be frank, and give it thee again. And yet I wish but for the thing I have. My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep. The more I give to thee, The more I have, for both are infinite.

The NURSE calls from offstage.

I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu.—Anon, good Nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true. Stay but a little. I will come again.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO

O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard, Being in night, all this is but a dream, Too flattering sweet to be substantial.

JULIET enters.

JULIET

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed. If that thy bent of love be honorable, Thy purpose marriage, send me word

ROMEO

Lady, I swear by the sacred moon, which outlines in silver the tops of these fruit trees—

JULIET

Please don't swear by the moon, the unreliable moon, which changes its position in the sky each month. I do not want your love to end up being similarly variable.

ROMEO

What should I swear by?

JULIET

Don't swear at all. Or, if you must swear, swear by your magnificent self, which is the god I worship like an idol, and I'll believe you.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love—

JULIET

Well, don't swear. Although you bring me joy, I can't take joy in this exchange of promises tonight. It's too wild, thoughtless, sudden. It's too much like lightning, which disappears before you can even say, "it's lightning." My love, good night. Our love, which now is like a flower bud, may blossom in the summer air into a beautiful flower by the next time we meet. Good night! I hope you feel in your heart the same sweet calm and rest that I feel in mine.

ROMEO

Are you going to leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction could you have tonight?

ROMEO

If we exchanged vows of love.

JULIET

I pledged my love before you even requested it. But now I wish I could take that promise back to give it again.

ROMEO

You'd take back your vow? Why, my love?

JULIET

In order to generously give it to you again. But I'm wishing for something I have already. My generosity to you is as endless as the sea, my love as deep as the sea. The more love I give you, the more I have. Both are infinite.

The NURSE calls from offstage.

I hear a noise from inside. Dear love, goodbye—Just a second, Nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true. Stay for a moment. I'll come right back.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO

Oh, blessed, blessed night! Because it's night, I'm scared that all this is a dream. It is too wonderful to be real.

JULIET enters.

JULIET

Three words, dear Romeo, and then good night. If your love is honorable and you want to marry me, send me word tomorrow.

NURSE
[From within] Madam!

JULIET
I come, anon.—But if thou mean'st not well, I do beseech thee
—

NURSE
[From within] Madam!

JULIET
By and by, I come.—To cease thy strife and leave me to my
grief. Tomorrow will I send.

ROMEO
So thrive my soul—

JULIET
A thousand times good night!

ROMEO
A thousand times the worse to want thy light. Love goes toward
love as schoolboys from their books, But love from love, toward
school with heavy looks.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO starts to leave. JULIET returns, on her balcony.

JULIET
Romeo!
What o'clock tomorrow Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO
By the hour of nine.

JULIET
I will not fail. 'Tis twenty year till then.
'Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone. And yet no further
than a wanton's bird That lets it hop a little from his hand Like
a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves, And with a silken thread
plucks it back again, So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO
I would I were thy bird.

JULIET
Sweet, so would Yet I should kill thee with much
cherishing. Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet
sorrow That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

ROMEO
Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast.

Juliet exits.

I wish I were sleep and peace, so I could sweetly rest with you
tonight. But now I'll go to my priest's [cell](#), to ask for his help
and tell him about my good luck.

ROMEO exits.

NURSE
[Offstage] Madam!

JULIET
I'll be right there!
[To ROMEO] But if your intentions are not honorable, I beg you—

NURSE
[Offstage] Madam!

JULIET
In a second, I'm coming!
[To ROMEO] to give up your efforts to win me and leave me to
grieve. I'll send the messenger tomorrow.

ROMEO
My soul depends on it—

JULIET
A thousand times good night.

ROMEO
It is a thousand times worse to leave you. A lover goes toward his
beloved as joyfully as a schoolboy leaving his books. But when a
lover leaves his beloved, he is as unhappy as a schoolboy on his
way to school.

JULIET exits.

ROMEO starts to leave. JULIET returns, on her balcony.

JULIET
Romeo!
At what time tomorrow should I send the messenger to you?

ROMEO
Nine o'clock.

JULIET
I won't fail. It will feel like twenty years until then.
It's almost morning. I want to force you to go. Yet I would not let
you move any further than a spoiled child would let his pet bird
go. The child so loves the bird that he will not let the bird hop any
more than a small distance from his hand before pulling it back by
a silk thread..

ROMEO
I wish I were your bird.

JULIET
Sweetheart, so do I. But I would pet you so much it would kill
you. Good night. Good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow that I
will say good night until it becomes tomorrow.

ROMEO
May sleep shut your eyes, and may you feel peace in your heart.

Juliet exits.

I wish I were sleep and peace, so I could sweetly rest with you
tonight. But now I'll go to my priest's [cell](#), to ask for his help
and tell him about my good luck.

ROMEO exits.