

Act II, Scene ii - Text

JULIET appears in a window above

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,
5 Who 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!
10 It 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.
15 Two 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
20 As 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
25 That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET

Ay me!

JULIET enters on the balcony.

But wait, what's that light in the window over
there? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Rise up,
beautiful sun, and kill the *jealous moon*. The
moon is already sick and pale with grief because
you, Juliet, her maid, are more beautiful than she.
Don't be her maid, because she is jealous. Virginity
makes her look sick and green. Only fools hold on
to their virginity. Let it go. Oh, there's my lady! Oh, it
is my love. Oh, I wish she knew how much I love
her. She's talking, but she's not saying anything. So
what? Her eyes are saying something. I will answer
them. I am too bold. She's not talking to me. Two of
the brightest stars in the whole sky had to go away
on business, and they're asking her eyes to twinkle
in their places until they return. What if her eyes
were in the sky and the stars were in her head?—
The brightness of her cheeks would outshine the
stars the way the sun outshines a lamp. If her eyes
were in the night sky, they would shine so brightly
through space that birds would start singing,
thinking her light was the light of day. Look how
she leans her hand on her cheek. Oh, I wish I was
the glove on that hand so that I could touch that
cheek.

JULIET

Oh, my!

ROMEO

(aside) She speaks.

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

ROMEO

(to himself) She speaks. Oh, speak again, bright
angel. You are as glorious as an angel tonight. You
shine above me, like a winged messenger from
heaven who makes mortal men fall on their backs
to look up at the sky, watching the angel walking
on the clouds and sailing on the air.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name.

35 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.
40 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!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet.

45 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name, which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word.

50 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?

JULIET

(not knowing ROMEO hears her) Oh, Romeo,
Romeo, why do you have to be Romeo? Forget
about your father and change your name. Or else,
if you won't change your name, just swear you love
me and I'll stop being a Capulet.

ROMEO

(to himself) Should I listen for more, or should I
speak now?

JULIET

(still not knowing ROMEO hears her) It's only your
name that's my enemy. You'd still be yourself even
if you stopped being a Montague. What's a
Montague anyway? It isn't a hand, a foot, an arm, a
face, or any other part of a man. Oh, be some other
name! What does a name mean? The thing we call
a rose would smell just as sweet if we called it by
any other name. Romeo would be just as perfect
even if he wasn't called Romeo. Romeo, lose your
name. Trade in your name—which really has
nothing to do with you—and take all of me in
exchange.

ROMEO

(to JULIET) I trust your words. Just call me your
love, and I will take a new name. From now on I
will never be Romeo again.

JULIET

Who are you? Why do you hide in the darkness
and listen to my private thoughts?

ROMEO

By a name

I know not how to tell thee who I am.

55 My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself

Because it is an enemy to thee.

Had I 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.

60 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.

65 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

70 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

75 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.

ROMEO

I don't know how to tell you who I am by telling
you a name. I hate my name, dear saint, because
my name is your enemy. If I had it written down, I
would tear up the paper.

JULIET

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

ROMEO

I am neither of those things if you dislike them.

JULIET

Tell me, how did you get in here? And why did you
come? The orchard walls are high, and it's hard to
climb over them. If any of my relatives find you
here they'll kill you because of who you are.

ROMEO

I flew over these walls with the light wings of love.
Stone walls can't keep love out. Whatever a man in
love can possibly do, his love will make him try to
do it. Therefore your relatives are no obstacle.

JULIET

If they see you, they'll murder you.

ROMEO

Alas, one angry look from you would be worse
than twenty of your relatives with swords. Just look
at me kindly, and I'm invincible against their hatred.

JULIET

I'd give anything to keep them from seeing you
here.

ROMEO

The darkness will hide me from them. And if you
don't love me, let them find me here. I'd rather they
killed me than have to live without your love.

JULIET

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO

80 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

Who told you how to get here below my
bedroom?

ROMEO

Love showed me the way—the same thing that
made me look for you in the first place. Love told
me what to do, and I let love borrow my eyes. I'm
not a sailor, but if you were across the farthest sea,
I would risk everything to gain you.

Glossary

Vestal livery: clothing worn by young women.

Discourses: speaks.

Wherefore: why.

Doff: cast aside.

Bescreen'd: hidden.

O'erperch: fly over.

Prorogued: postponed.