



## SCENE 2 *Capulet's orchard.*

*The following is one of the most famous scenes in all literature. The speeches contain some of the most beautiful poetry Shakespeare ever wrote.*

*Juliet appears on the balcony outside her room. She cannot see Romeo, who stands in the garden just below. At the beginning of the scene, both characters are speaking private thoughts to themselves. Romeo, however, can hear Juliet as she expresses her love for him despite his family name. Eventually, he speaks directly to her, and they declare their love for each other. Just before dawn Romeo leaves to make plans for their wedding.*

[*Enter Romeo.*]

**Romeo.** He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

[*Enter Juliet above at a window.*]

**1 He jests:** Mercutio makes jokes. What is Romeo saying about Mercutio?



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; O, it is my love!  
 O 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 eyes 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!  
 O that I were a glove upon that hand,  
 25 That I might touch that cheek!

**Juliet.** Ay me!

**Romeo.** She speaks.

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

35 **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  
 40 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,

**2-9 But soft . . . cast it off:** Romeo sees Juliet at her window. For a moment he is speechless (**But soft:** be still), but then he describes her beauty in glowing images of light and the heavenly bodies. He compares Juliet's beauty to the sun and says the moon looks sick and green because it is jealous of her.

**11-14 O that . . . speaks:** Romeo shifts back and forth between wanting to speak to Juliet and being afraid. Why is he reluctant to let her know he is in the garden?

**15-22 Two of . . . not night:** Romeo compares Juliet's eyes to stars in the sky.

**26** Remember that Juliet does not know that Romeo is listening.

**28-34 thou art . . . of the air:** He compares Juliet to an angel (**winged messenger of heaven**) who stands over (**bestrides**) the clouds.

**35-38 wherefore:** why. Juliet asks why the man she loves is named Montague, a name that she is supposed to hate. What does she ask him to do? What does she promise to do?

45 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 name would smell as sweet.  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
50 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.  
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;  
55 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  
60 I know not how to tell thee who I am.  
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 yet not drunk a hundred words  
65 Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound.  
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

**Romeo.** Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

**Juliet.** How camest thou hither, tell me, and  
wherefore?  
70 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;  
75 For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

**Juliet.** If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

**Romeo.** Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye  
80 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  
sight;

46-52 Juliet tries to convince herself that a name is just a meaningless word that has nothing to do with the person. She asks Romeo to get rid of (**doff**) his name.

53-55 Romeo startles Juliet by speaking aloud.

56-58 How dare you, hiding (**bescreened**), listen to my private thoughts (**counsel**)?

68-69 **How . . . wherefore:** How did you get here, and why did you come?

73-78 **With . . . thee:** Love helped me climb (**o'erperch**) the walls. Neither walls nor your relatives are a hindrance (**let**) to my love. (Romeo is carried away with emotion, but Juliet is more realistic.) What warning does she give?

80-81 **Look . . . enmity:** Smile on me, and I will be defended against your family's hatred (**enmity**).



Act Two, Scene 2. Romeo joins Juliet on the balcony to profess his love. (Zeffirelli, 1968)

85     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 foundst thou out this place?

**Romeo.** By love, that first did prompt me to enquire.

90     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 knowest the mask of night is on my face;  
 95     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”;  
 100     And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swearst,  
       Thou mayst prove false. At lovers’ perjuries,  
       They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
       If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.

**86–87 My life . . . love:** I’d rather die from their hatred than have my death postponed (**prorogued**) if you don’t love me.

**94–98 Thou . . . compliment:** Had I known you were listening, I would have gladly (**fain**) behaved more properly, but now it’s too late for good manners (**farewell compliment**). Why is Juliet embarrassed that Romeo overheard her?

**101–102 At . . . laughs:** Jove (the king of the gods) laughs at lovers who lie to each other. Why is Juliet worried?