**Romeo and Juliet -- Act 2, Scene II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Modern Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>ROMEO</em> returns</td>
<td><em>ROMEO</em> returns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROMEO</td>
<td>ROMEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>He jests at scars that never felt a wound.</td>
<td>It’s easy for someone to joke about scars if they’ve never been cut.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>JULIET</em> appears in a window above</td>
<td><em>JULIET</em> enters on the balcony.</td>
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<tr>
<td>But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?</td>
<td>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 <em>jealous moon</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.</td>
<td><em>Jealous moon</em>. The moon is already sick and pale with grief because you, Juliet, her maid, are more beautiful than she.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,</td>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is already sick and pale with grief,</td>
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<tr>
<td>That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be not her maid since she is envious.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Her vestal livery is but sick and green,</td>
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<tr>
<td>And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off!</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is my lady. Oh, it is my love.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oh, that she knew she were!</td>
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<tr>
<td>She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Her eye discourses. I will answer it.—</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am too bold. ‘Tis not to me she speaks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Having some business, do entreat her eyes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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

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

That I might touch that cheek!

**JULIET**

Ay me!

**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

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**

(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**

(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
(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.

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
I take thee at thy word.

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. 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.
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.

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
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death proroguèd, 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 'behavior light.
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more coy ing 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.

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessèd 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
Oh, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET
What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

ROMEo
Th’ exchange of thy love’s faithful position in the sky shifts. I don’t want you to turn out to be that inconsistent too.

ROMEo
What should I swear by?

JULIET
Don’t swear at all. But if you have to swear, swear by your wonderful self, which is the god I worship like an idol, and then 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 crazy. We haven’t done enough thinking. It’s too sudden. It’s too much like lightning, which flashes and then disappears before you can say, “it’s lightning.” My sweet, good night. Our love, which right now is like a flower bud in the summer air, may turn out to be a beautiful flower by the next time we meet. I hope you enjoy the same sweet peace and rest I feel in my heart.

ROMEo
I would be satisfied if we made each
vow for mine.

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

**ROMEO**
130 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.

135 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.

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_NURSE calls from within_

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

*Exit JULIET, above*

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

*Enter JULIET, above*

**JULIET**
Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed. If that thy bent of love be honorable, other true promises of love.

**JULIET**
I pledged my love to you before you asked me to. Yet I wish I could take that promise back, so I had it to give again.

**ROMEO**
You would take it back? Why would you do that, my love?

**JULIET**
Only to be generous and give it to you once more. But I’m wishing for something I already have. My generosity to you is as limitless as the sea, and my love is as deep. The more love I give you, the more I have. Both loves are infinite.

_The NURSE calls from offstage._

I hear a noise inside. Dear love, goodbye—Just a minute, good Nurse. Sweet Montague, be true. Stay here for a moment. I’ll come back.

*JULIET exits.*

**ROMEO**
Oh, blessed, blessed night! Because it’s dark out, I’m afraid all this is just a dream, too sweet to be real.

*JULIET enters on her balcony.*

**JULIET**
Three words, dear Romeo, and then it’s good night for real. If your intentions as a lover are truly honorable and you want...
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow
By one that I'll procure to come to thee
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

NURSE
(from within) Madam!

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

NURSE
(from within) Madam!

NURSE
(offstage) Madam!

JULIET
(to the NURSE) I'll be right there! (to ROMEO) But if you don't have honorable intentions, I beg you—

NURSE
(offstage) Madam!

JULIET
Alright, I'm coming!—I beg you to stop trying for me and leave me to my sadness. Tomorrow I'll send the messenger.

ROMEO
My soul depends on it—

JULIET
A thousand times good night.

Exit JULIET, above

JULIET
A thousand times good night.

ROMEO
A thousand times the worse to want thy light.
Love goes toward love as schoolboys

ROME0
Leaving you is a thousand times worse than being near you. A lover goes toward his beloved as enthusiastically as a schoolboy leaving his books, but when he
from their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

*Moves to exit Reenter JULIET, above*

**JULIET**

Hist! Romeo, hist!—Oh, for a falconer’s voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud,
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,
With repetition of “My Romeo!”

**ROMEO**

It is my soul that calls upon my name.
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

leaves his girlfriend, he feels as miserable as the schoolboy on his way to school.

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

**JULIET**

Hist, Romeo! Hist! Oh, I wish I could make a

**FALCONER’S**

*Juliet is trying to call to Romeo as if he was a falcon.*

**ECHO**

*Falconer’s call, so I could bring my little falcon back again. I’m trapped in my family’s house, so I must be quiet. Otherwise I would rip open the cave where*

**ECHO**

*Echo, a mythical woman who was scorned by Narcissus, withered with sadness repeating his name, and after her death, her voice still reverberated in caves, which is why we have the word “echo.”

**ROMEO**

My soul is calling out my name. The sound of lovers calling each others names through the night is silver-sweet. It’s the sweetest sound a lover ever hears.

**JULIET**

Romeo!

**ROMEO**

Romeo!
JULIET
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.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO
Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET
I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO
And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET
'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 I.
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.
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest.
Hence will I to my ghostly friar's close cell,
His help to crave and my dear hap to tell.

Exit

night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow that I'll say good night until tonight becomes tomorrow.

ROMEO
I hope you sleep peacefully. I wish I were Sleep and Peace, so I could spend the night with you. Now I'll go see my priest, to ask for his help and tell him about my good luck.

He exits.
Romeo and Juliet Act 2, Scene 2 Summary

- Romeo is wandering aimlessly around the Capulet backyard when guess-who appears on the balcony. "What light through yonder window breaks?" he asks.
- He then answers his own question. "It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!"
- Just when you think Romeo is cray-cray, Juliet is talking to herself, too. "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" she asks.
- You might wonder, "why is she asking where Romeo is?" Well, as it turns out, "Wherefore" doesn't mean "where." It means "why." Juliet is saying, "Why does the guy I love have to be a Montague?"
- Juliet goes on talking to herself about how amazing Romeo is.
- Romeo is smart enough to keep his mouth shut and listen. Finally, he can't resist anymore, and he calls out to her.
- Juliet is super embarrassed until she realizes that it's Romeo hiding in the bushes. This is bad news, because if her family finds Romeo, they'll kill him.
- Luckily, she gets over her shock fast enough to enjoy the most romantic love scene in the history of Western literature.
- There's lots of poetry, vows of love that sound a lot like religious worship, baffling language, and teenage melodrama.
- Then Juliet basically proposes to Romeo when she says "If that thy bent of love be honourable, / Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow." Translation: "If you love me and want to marry me, let me know ASAP."
- Romeo is game. They end up setting up a way to send messages the next day so they can plan the wedding. It does not involve overage on their parents' texting plan.
- Eventually, Romeo and Juliet run out of things to talk about and start babbling just so they don't have to leave each other—kind of a "You hang up," "No, you hang up," deal.
- But, in Shakespearian terms, "You hang up" is actually "Parting is such sweet sorrow / That I shall say goodnight till it be morrow."
- If this went down 400 years later, these kids would be running off to Vegas together but, this being a Shakespeare play, Juliet finally drags herself away to bed and Romeo hightails it off to Friar Laurence, his favorite priest, to figure out the wedding plans.