



MODERN VERSION

Act 2, Scene 2



ROMEO. Mercutio makes fun of love's scars: He's never felt love's wound.

[He sees Juliet at the window of Capulet's house.]

But quiet! What's that light shining through the window over there? It's like I'm looking east, and Juliet is the sun. Juliet, my beautiful sun, rise and shine; your brightness will make the moon disappear! That moon is like a woman who's sick with jealousy because she knows you're prettier than she is. Don't be the moon's maid if that's her **attitude**. Besides, the moonlight is like an ugly green outfit. Only clowns dress like that. Don't put it on! **2**

2 Structure: Blank Verse/Compare Across Texts

Read the two versions of the speech aloud. How is Shakespeare's version different? Which seems more effective? Explain.

Key Vocabulary

- **attitude** *n.*, set way of thinking or believing that can often be seen in someone's behavior, point of view

Literary Background

Mercutio is Romeo's relative and friend. Earlier, Romeo fell in love with Juliet at a ball, and Mercutio made fun of Romeo's feelings and his desire to see Juliet again.



[Juliet walks onto the balcony.]

It's the woman I love! If only she knew it! Her lips are moving, but I don't hear her saying anything. No problem. That look in her eye says it all, so I'll just talk to her eyes.

[Romeo opens his mouth to address her, but his courage fails.]

I'm too confident. It's not me she's talking to, but the stars. Two of the most beautiful stars in the sky have asked her eyes to take their place for a while. What if Juliet's eyes and the stars have changed places? The glow of Juliet's cheeks would make those stars look dim, the way daylight outshines a lamp. Her eyes, sparkling so brightly in heaven, would make birds sing, because they'd think it was the dawn of a new day. See how she rests her cheek on her hand! I wish I were a glove on that hand, so I could touch her cheek!

JULIET. *[sighing heavily]* Oh, dear!

ROMEO. She just said something. Keep talking, bright angel! You're a wonderful sight, standing up there above me, like an angel who suddenly appears on a cloud to ordinary people.



JULIET. Oh, Romeo, Romeo! Why are you “Romeo”? Tell your father you want to change your name. Or, if you won’t, then swear you love me, and I’ll stop using the name Capulet.

ROMEO. [*to himself*] Hmm . . . should I keep listening, or say something now?

JULIET. It’s just your name that’s my enemy, not you. You’d be the same person, even if your last name weren’t Montague. After all, what is a “Montague”? It’s not a hand, or a foot, or an arm, or a face, or any other part of a person. Why can’t you have another name? What’s in a name? Even if we called a rose something else, it would still smell as sweet. So if Romeo weren’t called Romeo, he’d still be perfect! Romeo, give up your name and take all of me instead!

ROMEO. [*to Juliet now*] I’ll take you at your word. Call me “Love,” as if I’d just been baptized and given a name. From now on, I’m done with the name “Romeo.”

JULIET. [*startled*] Who is that hiding in the darkness, spying on me?

ROMEO. I don’t know how to reply without using a name, and I hate my name because it’s your enemy. If my name were written on a piece of paper, I’d tear it up.

Cultural Background

In Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, two large columns supported a roof—called the “heavens”—over the back of the stage. Because few stage sets or props were used, Juliet would stand in this upper section, while Romeo hid behind one of the columns.





JULIET. As soon as you started to speak, I recognized your voice.
Aren't you Romeo, a Montague?

ROMEO. Neither one, if you dislike it.

JULIET. How did you get here, and why? The walls around the orchard are high and hard to climb. Considering who you are, this place could mean death for you if any of my relatives catch you here.

ROMEO. Love gave me wings to fly over these walls. Stone walls can't keep love out. Whatever love can do, love dares to try. So your relatives can't stop me.

JULIET. But if they see you, they'll kill you.

ROMEO. There's more danger in your eyes than in twenty of their swords. One sweet look from you, and I'll be safe from their hate. ¹⁰

JULIET. I wouldn't want them to catch you here for anything in the world.

¹⁰ Form Mental Images

Reread Romeo's lines in Shakespeare's version. What mental image did you form as you read these lines? How do they compare to the mental image you formed as you read the modern text?



ROMEO. Oh, I'm all right, I've got night's darkness to hide me. And if you love me, I don't care if they find me. I'd rather my life was ended by their hate than have to live without your love. ❖

ANALYZE *Romeo and Juliet*

- 1. Explain** How do Romeo and Juliet feel about each other and their families? What do they each consider to be important? How can you tell? Cite details from the text.
- 2. Vocabulary** Romeo's family and Juliet's family have been fighting for a long time. How have this **feud** and hatred between the families affected Romeo and Juliet?
- 3. Analyze Structure: Blank Verse** Reread the first two pages of Shakespeare's version and the modern version aloud. How are the two versions different? How does Shakespeare's use of blank verse and imagery affect the way you visualize the scene and the characters?
- 4. Focus Strategy Form Mental Images** Reread p. 712. Working with a partner, identify the words and phrases that appeal to your senses. Make a sketch of how you visualize both the setting and Romeo and Juliet.

Return to the Text

Reread and Write Imagine that Romeo and Juliet had a chance to explain to their parents how much they care about each other. Reread the scene. Then write a paragraph explaining what Romeo and Juliet could say to convince their parents that they really care about each other. Include details from the text to support your explanation.

Key Vocabulary

feud *n.*, long-standing quarrel or hostility between two families or groups