

Romeo and Juliet: A Tale of Two Balconies

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**Freely Adapted from the classic stage drama by
William Shakespeare.**

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*ROMEO AND JULIET:
A TALE OF TWO BALCONIES*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO

MODERN ROMEO

SHAKESPEARE JULIET

MODERN JULIET

*ROMEO AND JULIET:
A TALE OF TWO BALCONIES*

(Scene opens on stage split in two: present in both scenes is a balcony. Both MODERN JULIET and SHAKESPEARE JULIET are leaning on the railing, her head resting on her hand.)

(LIGHTS UP: Shakespeare duo, stage left.)

(SHAKESPEARE ROMEO enters from stage left pit, trying to get a glimpse of SHAKESPEARE JULIET on her balcony. He spots her and smiles.)

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: 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, who is already sick and pale with grief that thou her maid art far more fair than she. It is my lady; O, it is my love! O that she knew she were! See how she leans her cheek upon that hand, O that I were a glove upon that hand, that I might touch that cheek!

(Lights up on the Modern duo, stage right. Both the Modern set and the Shakespeare set are lighted. MODERN JULIET is in the same pose as SHAKESPEARE JULIET, but looking at her phone. MODERN ROMEO enters from stage right, eating from a bag of chips. He looks up at MODERN JULIET.)

MODERN ROMEO: Damn, she's hot. *(He reaches for another chip and realizes the bag is empty. He looks for a place to put it, then shrugs, crumples it up, and tosses it behind him.)*

SHAKESPEARE 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.

MODERN JULIET: Wow, Romeo's profile picture is adorable!

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: *(Aside.)* Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

MODERN ROMEO: Crap, she saw my duck-face.

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: ‘Tis by thy name that is my enemy. Thou art thyself, though not a Montague. What’s Montague? 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. Romeo, doff thy name; and for that name, which is no part of thee, take all myself.

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: (*Calls.*) I take thee at thy word. Henceforth, I never will be Romeo.

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: (*Startled.*) What man art thou that, thus bescreened in night, so stumblest on my counsel?

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: By a name. (*Starts to climb up to her balcony.*) 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.

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words of that tongue’s utterance, yet I know the sound. Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: (*Climbs up to her balcony.*) Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

(*MODERN JULIET is scrolling on her phone, leaning on the balcony. MODERN ROMEO looks at MODERN JULIET, then looks at a clearly visible staircase composed of very few stairs.*)

MODERN ROMEO: (*Makes a face.*) That’s a lot of stairs. (*He stares at them, uncertain. Then he gets an idea. He reaches in his back jeans’ pocket and pulls out his own phone. He dials a number and holds the phone to his ear. Moments later, MODERN JULIET’s phone rings.*)

MODERN JULIET: (*Answers.*) Hello?

MODERN ROMEO: Hey, look down. (*Smiles innocently.*)

MODERN JULIET: (*Looks down, sees MODERN ROMEO, startles.*) What the—? Are you stalking me?

MODERN ROMEO: (*Still using the phone.*) Well, we met at your party a few hours ago and I thought you were beautiful.

MODERN JULIET: Wait, so you followed me to my house?

MODERN ROMEO: Well, yeah, but that's not the point. I've fallen in love with you!

MODERN JULIET: (*Her smile freezes. Aside.*) *What?!* Well... (*She considers, looking him up and down.*) He is... cute. I mean, I don't know anything else about him, so that's all I really have to go on. (*She drums her fingers against the railing.*) Eh, what the heck. (*Turns to MODERN ROMEO, talking into the phone.*) I love you too!

MODERN ROMEO: Awesome.

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: How cam'st 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.

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: With love's light wings did I o'er perch 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.

MODERN JULIET: (*Doubtful.*) But, Romeo, you shouldn't be here. You know our parents, our family history—

MODERN ROMEO: (*Waves her concern away with his hand.*) Dude, it's fine. I know a guy who can make us... *moderately* convincing fake passports, we'll change our names, get on a plane and elope... it'll be fantastic—

MODERN JULIET: (*Shocked.*) Romeo! Calm down! (*Pulls phone away from her ear and leans down toward him.*) I'm thirteen.

MODERN ROMEO: (*Pauses.*) Alright, so then a junior passport.

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

MODERN JULIET: My dad is literally going to kill you.

SHAKESPEARE 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.

MODERN ROMEO: It's cool, I've got it covered. If there's one thing I've learned from TV, it's how to disguise yourself. (*Puts on obviously fake mustache.*)

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: I would not for the world they saw thee here.

MODERN JULIET: (*Chuckles, thinking he's being cute.*) I don't think that's going to work.

SHAKESPEARE 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.

MODERN ROMEO: Trust me, babe, I've got this. (*Flips up his jacket hood.*)

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: By love, that first did prompt me to enquire. He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes. I am no pilot, yet, wert thou as far as that vast shore wash'd with the furthest sea, I should adventure for such merchandise.

MODERN JULIET: (*Hangs up phone to talk directly to MODERN ROMEO.*) Wait. Are you being serious?

MODERN ROMEO: (*Still talking into phone.*) You think I would be joking about something like this? (*Realizes she ended the call. Looks up at MODERN JULIET.*) This is true love!

MODERN JULIET: We barely know each other!

(*MODERN ROMEO and MODERN JULIET continue to argue while SHAKESPEARE JULIET begins her next monologue.*)

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: Thou knowest 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...

MODERN ROMEO: Have you never heard of YOLO? I mean... I sit at home playing video games 24/7 when I should be sitting in class. And I'm not really feeling college.

MODERN JULIET: (*Dismissive*) Romeo, no one thinks that way. Not for real.

MODERN ROMEO: (*Climbs up to her balcony.*) So why don't we? What's life, if not for a little adventure?

MODERN JULIET: Of course, that sounds fantastic. But you have to know that we can't—

MODERN ROMEO: Why not? Because that's not how it is? Because no one does that? Let's start a trend.

MODERN JULIET: Even if we were to...

(*MODERN ROMEO smiles.*)

MODERN JULIET: We can't just disappear. We'll worry people. My parents would look for me.

MODERN ROMEO: Not if... Not if you were dead.

MODERN JULIET: (*Straightens quickly, taken aback.*) Don't kill me!

MODERN ROMEO: No, no, no! (*thinks about it, then shakes his head.*) No, of course not! But if we *pretend* you were dead...

MODERN JULIET: And how are you planning to do that?

MODERN ROMEO: Sedatives. We'll take something to make us look dead.

MODERN JULIET: And where are you going to get sedatives?

MODERN ROMEO: (*Reaches in his pocket.*) Already got some.

MODERN JULIET: Where did you get those?!

MODERN ROMEO: Relax. That guy living behind Wal-Mart sells them. I trust him. He has a beard.

MODERN JULIET: We can't just—

MODERN ROMEO: I think they're cherry-flavored.

MODERN JULIET: Give it to me.

(*MODERN ROMEO offers MODERN JULIET a vial of sedative.*)

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: Dearest love, why would you leave me so unsatisfied?

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: I am no stranger to self-controlled fate. Will you enjoin with me? (*Offers a vial of sedative.*)

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: I feel a sense of dread, yet life without my paramour is a life dead.

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: Truly the gods will it to be so.

(*SHAKESPEARE ROMEO, SHAKESPEARE JULIET, MODERN ROMEO, MODERN JULIET drink the vials.*)

(*Lights down as each fall unconscious.*)

(Lights up, all lying on the stage floor, unconscious. MODERN ROMEO and SHAKESPEARE ROMEO are cuddling. MODERN ROMEO stirs, and hugs SHAKESPEARE ROMEO closer. After a moment, both open their eyes and slowly look at each other. Both scream, and rip apart.)

MODERN JULIET: *(Wakes.)* Romeo! Stop screaming! What— *(Notices SHAKESPEARE ROMEO and JULIET. Screams.)*

SHAKESPEARE JULIET: *(Sits up, and glances between the screaming people, annoyed. Sighs.)* Silence!

(All stop yelling.)

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: *(Draws a sword.)* Worry you not, my dear! I will protect you from these villains! *(Looks MODERN ROMEO up and down.)* What are you?

MODERN ROMEO: A guy...?

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: I will protect you from “a guy”!

MODERN JULIET: *(Pulls herself to her feet as SHAKESPEARE ROMEO raises the sword.)* No, please!

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: Please Miss, keep your distance! Do not disturb this fray!

(MODERN JULIET pulls out pepper spray, sprays it in SHAKESPEARE ROMEO’s eyes, stamps a foot over his and pulls the sword from his hands. SHAKESPEARE ROMEO falls to his knees, his hands over his eyes.)

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: Juliet! My love! Run! I hath been poisoned!

MODERN JULIET: It’s pepper spray, buddy. Relax.

SHAKESPEARE ROMEO: *(Looks up at her, mesmerized.)* Wherfore art you?