

## Juliet Balcony Monologue

### The Balcony Scene. II ii 36

In her most famous speech and her first monologue, Juliet wonders why the newfound love (or is it lust?) of her life is cursed with the last name Montague, the long-standing enemy of her family.

This scene takes place after Romeo and Juliet met at the Capulet's party. Romeo, infatuated, wandered his way back into Capulet's gardens right to Juliet's balcony. At the same time, Juliet comes out, unaware of Romeo's presence, and ponders her situation out loud.

The monologue begins with the now-famous line:

**O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?**

This line is often misinterpreted as Juliet asking about Romeo's whereabouts. However, "wherefore" in Shakespearean English meant "why." Juliet is thus questioning her own fate of falling in love with the enemy.

She then continues to plead, still thinking she is alone:

**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.**

This passage reveals that the two families have an antagonist history, and Romeo and Juliet's love would be difficult to pursue. Juliet wishes Romeo would give up his family but is also ready to give up hers.

To soothe herself, she rationalizes as to why she should continue to love Romeo, saying that a name is superficial and does not necessarily make up a person.

**'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
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 name would smell as sweet;**

### Declarations of Love. II ii 90

Later in the same scene, Juliet discovers that Romeo has been in the garden all along, overhearing her confessions. Since their emotions aren't a secret anymore, the two star-crossed lovers profess their affections openly.

Here are some lines from Juliet's monologue and an explanation in modern English.

**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 to-night  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!**

Juliet is glad it is night time and Romeo cannot see how red she is from the embarrassment of breaking conventions and letting him overhear all she has said. Juliet wishes she could have kept up her good manners. But, realizing it is too late for that, she accepts the situation and becomes more straightforward.

**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  
Then say, Jove laughs. [...]**

In this passage, Juliet displays the disposition of a person in love. She knows that Romeo loves her, but at the same time is anxious to hear it from him, and even then she wants to make sure he isn't simply falsely exaggerating.

### Juliet's Choice. IV iii 21

In her last longer monologue, Juliet takes a big risk by deciding to trust in the friar's plan to fake her own death and wake within the tomb, where Romeo should be waiting for her. Here, she contemplates the potential danger of her decision, unleashing a combination of fear and determination.

**Come, vial.  
What if this mixture do not work at all?  
Shall I be married then to-morrow morning?  
No, no: this shall forbid it: lie thou there.  
(Laying down her dagger.)**

As Juliet is about to take the poison, she wonders what would happen if it doesn't work and she is afraid. Juliet would rather kill herself than marry someone new. The dagger here represents her plan B.

**What if it be a poison, which the friar  
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,  
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,  
Because he married me before to Romeo?  
I fear it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,  
For he hath still been tried a holy man.**

Juliet is second-guessing whether or not the friar is being honest with her. *Is the potion a sleeping potion or a lethal one?* Since the friar married the couple in secret, Juliet is nervous that he might be now trying to cover up what he did by killing her in case he gets in trouble with either the Capulets or Montagues. In the end, Juliet calms herself by saying the friar is a holy man and wouldn't trick her.

**How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
I wake before the time that Romeo  
Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!  
Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,  
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?**

Thinking of other worst-case scenarios, Juliet wonders what would happen if the sleeping potion wore off before Romeo could remove her from the tomb and she suffocated to death. She ponders that if she wakes up alive, she might be so afraid of the darkness and all the dead bodies, with their horrible smells, that she might go crazy.

But in the end, Juliet rashly decides to take the potion as she exclaims:

**Romeo, I come! This do I drink to thee.**