

# Analysis of act 2 scene 2 of romeo and juliet

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In the beginning of this play the two families of Verona, the Capulet's and the Montague's, have been in a feud for generations. Romeo Montague believes he is deeply in love with Rosaline at this point. He conveys this feeling using language filled with oxymoron - " O heavy lightness, serious vanity...Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health".

These oxymoron show that Romeo's love for Rosaline is passionate and dramatic but maybe not as real as he thinks. When Romeo and his kinsmen find out about the Capulet ball, they know it will be dangerous to attend. But Benvolio convinces Romeo that it will be a good opportunity to compare Rosaline to more beautiful girls. Romeo strongly disagrees, but says he will go, in order to prove Benvolio wrong. At the feast he sees Juliet and falls in love with her at first sight. Their first meeting - Act 1 Scene 5 - is quick and short, in the form of a sonnet.

The language is much simpler and down to earth than Romeo's dramatic experience with Rosaline. Because the sonnet is short the lovers have to express important things in a concise way, which means the writing is very intense. Sonnets have always been associated with love poems. Romeo and Juliet's second meeting - Act 2 Scene 2 - is a lot longer and a lot more detailed. In this scene the lovers get to know each other better. The scene is long, sometimes when reading it's difficult to follow the action and at the beginning of the scene it is unclear who is talking to who and which words are private.

Of course, however, on stage all the action would be instantly clear. I think Shakespeare may be suggesting something important through this scene.

Perhaps, he is saying that it's easy to fall in love but it's not as easy to start a proper relationship. On close reading there are lots of examples of the differences and the contrasts between the two lovers in this scene. One of the major differences between the two lovers is the way that they refer to their feelings for each other.

Romeo uses light as the main expression of his love for Juliet. When he first sees her at her window he says "...what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon," Here he is describing her as the brightest possible thing. He describes her eyes as "Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven" and talks about them 'twinkling'. Also he says "Her eyes...

so brightThat birds would sing, and think it were not night." Romeo doesn't only refer to her eyes, but also mentions that "The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars, As daylight doth a lamp." Finally, he describes her as a "bright angel", On the contrary, Juliet is expressing something very different. At first she doesn't see Romeo in clear light, but in the shadows of the trees. She doesn't even know who he is: "What man art thou, that thus bescreened in nightSo stumblest on my counsel?" Also when Juliet realizes that it's Romeo, what she recognizes is not the look of Romeo but the sound of his voice, which may suggest that her love is based on more than the brightness of his physical appearance. "My ears have not yet drunk a hundred wordsOf thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound.

" Elizabethan audiences were used to all these references to light because Elizabethan theatre only functioned in natural light and therefore needed this <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-act-2-scene-2-of-romeo-and-juliet/>

imagery to help their imagination. However, it is likely that Shakespeare is contrasting the lovers in order to explore the differences between them. I find it intriguing that Act 2 Scene 2 is so well known as ‘the balcony scene’ yet in the Heinemann edition, there is no mention of a balcony. We are just told that Juliet enters at the window, which could very well be on the ground floor. However in the New Penguin edition the stage directions say, “enter Juliet above” and “enter Juliet above again”. Through this, Shakespeare really emphasizes the difference between the two lovers.

He puts them on two different levels. Juliet is standing on her balcony, where as Romeo is down in the orchard. The physical positioning of the two lovers in this scene may well reflect the difficulties in their love affair. Certainly it is another example of Shakespeare contrasting them. Perhaps Shakespeare is saying that Juliet is too good for Romeo, by placing her physically higher.

In Elizabethan times, royalty was always raised above the level of the commoner- the Queen would have sat ‘On high’ on the throne to illustrate her superiority. On the other hand, perhaps Shakespeare is suggesting that Romeo is worshipping Juliet, while her love is more practical. If we look in detail at the section of the scene, after Romeo has made himself known to Juliet we can find many examples of Juliet’s practicality.” How cam’st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore? The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb,” Romeo’s response highlights the contrasts between Juliet’s practical concerns and his poetic declarations: “With love’s light wings did I o’erperch these walls”. A little later Juliet says, “If they do see thee, they will murder thee.” She worries for Romeo’s physical safety but he doesn’t consider this important: “And but thou love me, let them find me here.

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" Finally, Juliet asks, " By whose direction found'st thou out this place?" This is another of Juliet's practical questions but Romeo answers poetically personifying love:" By love that first did prompt me to inquire; He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes." Towards the end of the scene Juliet uses her practicality to convey the need for the lovers to get married. She tells Romeo in a very straightforward way:"...

send me word tomorrow...Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite".

Due to the social conditions Juliet had to follow as a woman, marriage for her was vital and she could not lose her virginity before it. Perhaps we can see Juliet's practicality as a result of the social conditions she is living in, as opposed to Romeo's life, which is a lot freer.

It could be argued that all the differences between Romeo and Juliet in this scene might be a warning. Possibly Shakespeare is saying that the lovers have a rocky road ahead and that this relationship won't be as easy as others. All the secrecy set up in this scene - from the first moments of Romeo hidden in the shadows, to the final plans for a secret marriage - continues throughout the entire play. The secrecy is a great strain on the relationship. This isn't helped by the lack of communication hinted at in this scene.

In places, the two lovers are speaking two rather different languages and have different priorities. Lack of communication is their downfall when the letter from Friar Lawrence doesn't arrive to Romeo, in Act 5 Scene 2, with tragic consequences. In fact, of course, their relationship ends in both their

deaths. Although this scene is full of love and passion, it also highlights some instability, some inequality, but most importantly fear of what is to come.