

"THE REAL PROBLEM"
One Act Play
by Bruce Kane

In a comedy about love and men, Juliet gets conflicting advice from the ever loyal and romantic Desdemona, whose husband Othello still suspects her of having an affair; "Taming of the Shrew's" Katherine, who claims that "all men are pigs"; and, finally, the head of Henry VIII's late wife Anne Boleyn, who believes women should be free to pursue their appetites... in spite of her present condition.

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22448 Bessemer St.
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
PH: 818-999-5639
E-mail: bkane1@socal.rr.com

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"THE REAL PROBLEM"
by Bruce Kane

SETTING: The Cauldron – An Elizabethan era pub

CHARACTERS:

Desdemona: Blonde, beautiful, sweet, trusting, married to Othello

Juliet: Young, pretty, impatient – dating Romeo

Katherine: Brunette, voluptuous, ill tempered – engaged to Petruchio

Anne Boleyn: Late wife of Henry VIII. Actually just the head of Anne Boleyn.

Hecate: Waitress at The Cauldron. One of the witches from MacBeth

(Lights up on Juliet pacing impatiently while Desdemona sits at a table on which sits the head of Anne Boleyn.)

JULIET: *(quite Shakespearean)* Romeo... Romeo... Wherefore art thou Romeo?

ANNE: (*annoyed*) Is she gonna do that all day?

DES: Leave her alone... She's in love.

ANNE: Love... Give me a break. (*to Juliet*) How long have you and this..?

JULIET: Romeo...

ANNE: Romeo... been getting it on?

JULIET: We're not getting it on.

ANNE: Then what's the point?

DES: They just met. A relationship takes time to grow... to mature.

JULIET: The real problem is...

ANNE: I knew it... Now we're getting down to the nitty gritty. What's her name?

JULIET: What's whose name?

ANNE: The real problem. What's her name?

JULIET: There's nobody else.

ANNE: There's always somebody else. Until my recent surgical procedure the real problem was usually me, I'm happy to say.

JULIET: The real problem is that he's a Montague.

ANNE: Oh, crap.

JULIET: Exactly.

DES: So, he's a Montague?

JULIET: Our families hate each other.

DES: Tell me about it.

JULIET: Your families don't get along, either?

DES: His side is fine... It's mine... You know... The whole racial thing.

JULIET: It's terrible. We're always having to sneak around so no one will see us.

ANNE: I know... Isn't that hot?

DES: Oh please... Look what sneaking around got you. (*to Juliet*) Relax... He'll be here.

ANNE: Yeah, when he wants something.

(The front door slams open with a bang. Katherine storms in.)

KATHERINE: I... Hate... Men.

ANNE: Look who's here. The Duchess of "Shrews-bury".

KATHERINE: Men... Are... Pigs.

DES: Oh, you don't mean that, Katherine.

KATHERINE: All... Men... Are... Pigs.

ANNE: Alright... What did Petruchio do this time?

KATHERINE: He's a man. Isn't that enough?

DES: You say that about every guy you date.

KATHERINE: That's because every guy I date... is a pig.

DES: What about Lorenzo? You two were pretty hot and heavy there for a while.

KATHERINE: Until he turned into a... Pig. A whiny, sniveling, momma's boy... Pig.

DES: Antonio wasn't a momma's boy.

KATHERINE: No Antonio was a preening, self absorbed, narcissistic... Pig.

DES: Okay. Marcello wasn't sniveling, he wasn't self absorbed and he certainly wasn't a momma's boy.

KATHERINE: No, he wasn't any of those things. But he was married... the Pig.

ANNE: I didn't know that.

KATHERINE: Neither did I.

ANNE: Face it, Katie. The only reason you fight with all these guys is for the make-up sex afterwards. Not that I blame you.

(Hecate enters carrying a tray. She places the food orders in front of Desdemona and Anne)

HECATE: Two orders of eye of newt. One with a side of tongue. And one flagon of sow's blood.
(puts the flagon in front of Anne)

ANNE: *(to Hecate)* Excuse me.

HECATE: Yes?

ANNE: A straw would be nice.

HECATE: I'll be right back. A flagon of sow's blood, Miss Katherine?

KATHERINE: A double espresso.

HECATE: Coming up.

DES: Maybe you should consider cutting back on the caffeine, Katherine

JULIET: If he doesn't show up soon, I swear I'll never talk to him again.

KATHERINE: What's her problem?

DES: Her young man didn't show up.

KATHERINE: (*to Juliet*) Count your blessings.

ANNE: That's what I tried to tell her.

KATHERINE: (*to Anne*) A girl after my own heart. High five. (*realizes*) Oh... Sorry.

JULIET: What am I going to do?

KATHERINE: For one thing, you're gonna stop mooning around over this... what'shisname?

JULIET: Romeo.

KATHERINE: (*mockingly*) Romeo? You're kidding.

JULIET: What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

KATHERINE: Who told you that?

JULIET: He did.

ANNE: Before or after he put his hand down your dress?

DES: Behave yourself.

KATHERINE: You want this Romeo of yours to take you seriously?

JULIET: Yes... With all my heart.

KATHERINE: Then, tell him to take a hike.

JULIET: Excuse me.

KATHERINE: Tell him to get lost... Tell him to take long walk off a short pier.

JULIET: That doesn't make any sense.

DES: Don't listen to her.

ANNE: Listen to her.

KATHERINE: Men only want one thing. And as soon as they get it, they want it from someone else.

ANNE: Amen, sister.

KATHERINE: As an example of what I'm talking about.... Take Petruchio... Please.

DES: How can you talk like that about the man you're going to marry?

KATHERINE: Who said I was going to marry him?

DES: But your father has announced the date of your forthcoming marriage.

KATHERINE: My father just wants me out of the house. I could be marrying a goat for all he cares.

DES: But once a marriage has been announced...

KATHERINE: My father said I was going to marry Petruchio. I didn't say I was going to marry him.

JULIET: I'm confused.

KATHERINE: Don't be, that's the man's job. It's your job to keep him that way.

ANNE: Where were you when I was tall?

KATHERINE: Remember, it's not the destination that counts. It's the journey. Men love journeys. All you have to do is keep moving the goalposts.

DES: Nonsense. Othello and I are perfectly happy.

KATHERINE: (*doubtful*) Really?

DES: Really.

ANNE: What have you heard?

DES: (*defensively*) She hasn't heard anything because there's nothing to hear.

ANNE: What have you heard?

KATHERINE: Well... I don't want to gossip.

ANNE: Gossip is only when it's behind someone's back. She's sitting right here. So spill.

KATHERINE: Petruchio told me that Iago told him that that's there's trouble in paradise.

DES: Iago doesn't know what he's talking about. There is no such thing.

KATHERINE: If you say so.

ANNE: What's she talking about?

DES: Nothing.

ANNE: Really? Nothing?

ANNE: Oh come on Des... It's only us girls.

DES: Well, Othello has been acting a little strange lately.

ANNE: Like how strange? What strange?

DES: He keeps questioning me all the time.

JULIET: About what? What kind of questions?

DES: About little things. Dumb things.

ANNE: Does he think you're fooling around?

DES: No, of course not.

KATHERINE: Are you fooling around?

DES: No. How could you even think such a thing?

ANNE: If you're not, you should be.

DES: *(to Juliet)* Don't listen to her. She's just bitter.

ANNE: Only you could have the worst of two worlds. A husband that thinks you're having an affair without the fun of actually having one.

DES: Could we please change the subject.

KATHERINE: This is exactly what I'm talking about.

DES: Don't you tell this impressionable child she should be having promiscuous relationships.

KATHERINE: I'm telling her just the opposite. If Othello was still pursuing you, he wouldn't be accusing you of sleeping with other men, he'd be competing with them.

JULIET: *(impatiently)* Oh where is he?

(The play continues)

**“UNDER THE BALCONY”
(A One Act Comedy)
by Bruce Kane
with help from W. Shakespeare**

Copyright: Bruce Kane Productions 2009
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22448 Bessemer St.
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
PH: 818-336-1063
E-mail: bkane1@socal.rr.com

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**“UNDER THE BALCONY”
by Bruce Kane**

PLACE: Courtyard of the Capulets

TIME: After midnight

SET: Two balcony windows

CHARACTERS:

Romeo

Juliet

Casanova

(Lights up on Romeo pacing anxiously under Juliet's balcony. Suddenly, a figure in black races across the stage and crashes into Romeo, knocking them both off their feet)

CASANOVA: My apologies, my young lord.

ROMEO: Who art thou?

CASANOVA: (*stands*) No one of consequence.

ROMEO: (*being helped to his feet*) Then what is it you seek in this place?

CASANOVA: Exit. If thou would'st be so kind as to point me to the nearest gate.

ROMEO: My direction will do thee no good.

CASANOVA: If it is good direction it will, indeed, do me a great deal of good.

ROMEO: Only if thou art a phantom.

CASANOVA: How so, my young friend?

ROMEO: All gates are locked at the stroke of twelve.

CASANOVA: Then, perhaps, thou would'st be so kind as to accompany me to the nearest wall. A leg up and I will disappear into the night as though I were a phantom.

ROMEO: Leave this very place? I cannot.

CASANOVA: Art thou a prisoner?

ROMEO: Only of my lady's smile.

CASANOVA: Ah... A damsel.

ROMEO: Aye. The fairest eyes have ever gazed upon.

CASANOVA: So here thee stands in darkness, lit only by a pale moon, waiting for a sign, a signal, perhaps, that the husband of the lady in question is otherwise occupied?

ROMEO: Oh no. Tis not so.

CASANOVA: I am truly sorry to hear such.

ROMEO: I would'st not dally with another man's wife.

CASANOVA: Other men's wives are the only wives with which one should dally.

ROMEO: And dishonor the bonds of matrimony?

CASANOVA: Never. I honor the bonds of matrimony more than any man thou shalt make acquaintance of.

ROMEO: I am happy to hear such.

CASANOVA: Without marriage there would'st be no married women. And a world without married women would be a sad and empty world indeed.

ROMEO: Indeed.

CASANOVA: A marriage is liketh a beautiful garden, would's't thou agree?

ROMEO: Ay, I would's't.

CASANOVA: And a garden must be constantly tended, would's't thou also agree?

ROMEO: I would's't.

CASANOVA: But left to neglect a garden will wither and die.

ROMEO: True.

CASANOVA: And in this age, most husbands, tis sad to behold, pay little attention to the tending of their marriage garden.

ROMEO: Tis sad, indeed.

CASANOVA: If the garden is to blossom into full ripeness, tis the wife, then, who must see to its tender care.

ROMEO: Spoken well.

CASANOVA: So it is only in the service of restoring the bloom to that rose that is the married woman that I enter the garden to plow her neglected furrow.

ROMEO: (*circling Casanova*) I know thee.

CASANOVA: I fear that is not possible

ROMEO: I have seen thee before.

CASANOVA: I think not. I am not of this city.

ROMEO: My friend Mercutio didst point thee out when once we did visit Venice. Thou art Casanova. Mercutio said thou has't seduced more women than any man in Italy.

CASANOVA: Your friend was sadly mistaken.

ROMEO: Was he?

CASANOVA: In limiting my humble achievements to Italy alone.

ROMEO: Mercutio sayeth every man dos't hate thee.

CASANOVA: Jealousy sometimes doth find expression in anger.

ROMEO: And there is not a woman in all Christendom that trusts thee.

CASANOVA: Indeed.

ROMEO: And this thou freely admit?

CASANOVA: Why else would'st so many extend me invitation to attend them in their boudoir?

ROMEO: Is that what thou art doing here this night? Dallying with another man's wife?

CASANOVA: No longer, I am sad to report.

ROMEO: Scorned by a woman much offended?

CASANOVA: Chased by a husband much surprised. Which is why I implore thine help in scaling that far wall.

ROMEO: Thou dishonor a woman and expecteth me to aid thy retreat?

CASANOVA: Dishonor? By showing my appreciation of what her husband has so foolishly chosen to ignore? Why, I pay her the highest honor.

ROMEO: Thou art quick of tongue.

CASANOVA: Exactly what the lady sayeth before we were so rudely interrupted.

ROMEO: Thou art carnal and debased.

CASANOVA: Before passing judgment my young Lord, hear me out.

ROMEO: Dos't I have choice in the matter?

CASANOVA: Thou could'st aid my escape and render me speechless.

ROMEO: And miss a glance of my love's fair visage?

CASANOVA: I will speak quickly as I must make haste. Whilst a woman, young and virginal, sets marriage as the price for the gift of her virtue, a married woman has no virtue to make gift of and no need of marriage, thereby making pleasure it's own reward. Here me well, my young novice. A woman with husband has so much to offer and asks so little in return.

(A light appears on Juliet's balcony)

ROMEO: But soft what light through yonder window breaks?

CASANOVA: Excuse me.

(Juliet steps out onto the balcony)

ROMEO: Tis, the east and Juliet is the sun.

CASANOVA: *(gazes on Juliet appreciatively)* Thou speakest the truth, young lord. Your maiden is fair, indeed. If she was but married, I would'st gladly be your rival.

ROMEO: I must speak to her.

CASANOVA: Quiet... Thou must not speak.

ROMEO: How will she know my feelings?

CASANOVA: If thou is to find success with maidens fair, thou must never reveal thy true feelings,

ROMEO: But she must know I love her.

CASANOVA: No... She must only know that she loves thee.

ROMEO: Thy preaching makes no sense.

CASANOVA: When engaging the fairer sex, young lord, take thy satisfaction in harvesting the fruit. Tis not necessary to own the orchard.

ROMEO: It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!

CASANOVA: Wait one minute. Thou art are standing here in the middle of the night, under her balcony and she knows not you are her love?

ROMEO: I was wearing a mask when first we met?

CASANOVA: A mask?

ROMEO: Aye, a mask.

CASANOVA: Good. Tis very good.

ROMEO: Tis?

CASANOVA: Tis.

ROMEO: How so?

CASANOVA: She knows not your face, therefore, when the moment comes, and it will, she cannot slappeth it nor spitteth in it.

(Juliet starts to speak)

ROMEO: She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?

CASANOVA: Tis what women do. Thou art young, but thou wilt become accustomed. It falleth under the heading "If thou cared for me, thou couldn't read my mind"

ROMEO: Look!!!

CASANOVA: *(frightened)* What? Where?

ROMEO: Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

CASANOVA: Be careful how thou callest out my young lord. You scareth the very crap out of me.

ROMEO: 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 eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

CASANOVA: But fortunately for us, it is night... If we hie before the sun doth rise, we can be gone with no one the wiser.

ROMEO: Oh, see, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

CASANOVA: Great cheek leaning... Never saw better. Let us hie.

ROMEO: *(to Juliet)* Thou hast a smile so bright
Thou couldst't have been a candle.
I wouldst't hold thee so tight
Thou couldst't have been a handle.

(During the above speech, Romeo's gestures mirror the words in much the same manner as a Motown group's choreography)

ROMEO: Be strong young lord. Resist the... temptations.

JULIET : Ay me!

ROMEO: She speaks

CASANOVA: They do that from time to time. Tis nothing about which to become alarmed.

JULIET: O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?

CASANOVA: Who is this Romeo of whom she speaks?

ROMEO: I am the very same.

CASANOVA: Nice to meet thee, young Romeo.

JULIET: 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.

CASANOVA: What did she just say?

ROMEO: Deny thy father...

CASANOVA: No, the last part.

ROMEO: And I will no longer be a Capulet.

CASANOVA: She is a Capulet?

ROMEO: Yes, she is Juliet, the daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet.

CASANOVA: Oh boy.

ROMEO: Thou knowest the Capulets?

CASANOVA: I knowest.

ROMEO: Thou has't become familiar with my true love's father, Lord Capulet, then.

CASANOVA: No, thy true love's father is not the Capulet with whom I have become familiar.

ROMEO: Who then?

CASANOVA: Discretion provides a lock to my speech.

ROMEO: (*hits him*) Lady Cap...? I do not believe it. (*disgusted*) Thou and Lady Capulet!!!

CASANOVA: Why dos't thou find it so hard to believe? Thou thinkest a woman the likes of Lady Capulet banks the fires of her passion upon the saying of her wedding vows?

ROMEO: But she is the mother of ...

CASANOVA: She is a woman, young Romeo.

ROMEO: (*saddened and disillusioned*) Thou and Lady Capulet.

CASANOVA: So now thou gainsay the urgency of my exit before these walls make prisoners of us both.

JULIET : '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.

CASANOVA: Of what doth she speak?

ROMEO: Our families do not see eye to eye. In fact they hateth each other.

JULIET: O, be some other name!

CASANOVA: From what I know of the Capulets, that is very good advice.

JULIET: What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;

CASANOVA: Be careful, my young friend. Roses get pruned and on a regular basis... If thou followeth my drift.

ROMEO: *(to Juliet)*
I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

CASANOVA: Wilt thou keepest it down. She will knoweth we are here.

JULIET :What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

CASANOVA: *(changing sound of his voice)* Nobody... Sorry to disturb thy solitude. Just passing through.

ROMEO: By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:

CASANOVA: Good... Good... Thou art a quick learner.

ROMEO: 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 utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO: Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

JULIET: How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?

CASANOVA: Just stumbled in by mistake. We will be out of thy way in a nonce. In a nonce and a half.

JULIET: 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.

CASANOVA: Dids't thou hear what the lady sayeth? The place is death if any of her kinsmen find thee here. And I fright to thinketh what they will doeth if they findeth me here...ith.

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

CASANOVA: Listen to the little lady.

(The play continues)

“CINDY AND JULIE”

**A Short One Act Comedy
By Bruce Kane**

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22448 Bessemer St.
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
PH: 818-999-5639
E-mail: bkane1@socal.rr.com

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CINDY and JULIE

Time: Whenever

Place: A Waiting Room

Characters:

Cinderella Charming: – Young, pretty, disappointed.

Juliet Montague (nee Capulet): - Younger than Cinderella. Pretty, hopeful

Young Woman - Younger Than Cinderella

LIGHTS UP:

(Two young women sit nervously in a waiting room.)

JULIET: Excuse me. Have we met before?

CINDERELLA: I don't think so.

JULIET: You seem so familiar. You sure we haven't...

CINDERELLA: Yes, I'm sure.

JULIET: I feel I know you from somewhere.

CINDERELLA: It happens.

JULIET: My name is Juliet. *(she extends her hand)* Juliet Montague.

CINDERELLA: Cinderella... Cinderella Charming.

JULIET: *(excited)* Really?

CINDERELLA: *(world weary)* Really.

JULIET: From the...?

CINDERELLA: I'm afraid so.

JULIET: Oh wow.

CINDERELLA: Yeah... Oh wow. *(following another long pause)* Montague. Is that your married name?

JULIET: Yes... But, I'm thinking about going back my maiden name.

CINDERELLA: I've thought about that. But it seems such a hassle. Besides Charming sounds a lot nicer than Schekendorff. What was your maiden name?

JULIET: Capulet.

CINDERELLA: *(surprised)* Juliet Capulet?

JULIET: *(shyly)* Yeah.

CINDERELLA: I thought you were dead.

JULIET: I thought you lived happily ever after.

CINDERELLA: That was the plan.

JULIET: The best laid plans...

CINDERELLA: So, the suicide...?

JULIET: We faked it.

CINDERELLA: Faked your own suicide? Why?

JULIET: It was the only way we could think of to get away from all the craziness. His parents... My parents. The whole Capulet – Montague thing.

CINDERELLA: I gather it didn't work out. Between you and Romeo, I mean. Otherwise you wouldn't be here...

JULIET: We were so young. I was fourteen. I was in that rebellious period. My father said left, I went right. My mother said marry Paris, I picked Romeo. If she'd've said marry Romeo, I'd probably be divorced from Paris now.

CINDERELLA: I'm sorry.

JULIET: Live and learn. You and the Prince didn't work out, either?

CINDERELLA: It was doomed from the start.

JULIET: I'm beginning to wonder if they're all doomed from the start.

CINDERELLA: I'm not the one to ask.

JULIET: In the book you seemed so happy.

CINDERELLA: A fairy tale.

JULIET: None of it was true?

CINDERELLA: I was poor. That part was true.

JULIET: The fairy godmother? The pumpkin...?

CINDERELLA: Oh, please... A fairy godmother?

JULIET: Not even the carriage and the six white horses?

CINDERELLA: Rented.

JULIET: That was my favorite part. How disappointing.

CINDERELLA: No more so that finding out you didn't die.

JULIET: Excuse me.

CINDERELLA: I'm only speaking in literary terms. The whole dramatic arc of the story is predicated on you dying.

JULIET: Disappointed?

CINDERELLA: No... No... Well, in a way. I'm sorry.

JULIET: It's okay... The truth just isn't that romantic.

(The play continues)

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