

An excerpt from...

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

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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'st thou agree?

ROMEO: Ay, I would'st.

CASANOVA: And a garden must be constantly tended, would'st thou also agree?

ROMEO: I would'st.

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 couldst't 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 women 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 woulds't 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 could'st 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 dost 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.

ROMEO: *(to Juliet)* Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords:

CASANOVA: Twenty? It takes but one.

ROMEO: I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;

CASANOVA: They have torches. Thee dos't not have squat.

(The play continues...)

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