

**“UNDER THE BALCONY”  
(A One Act Comedy)  
by Bruce Kane**

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**“UNDER THE BALCONY”  
by Bruce Kane**

PLACE: Courtyard of the Capulets  
TIME: After midnight

CHARACTERS:  
Casanova  
Romeo  
Juliet (voice only)

*(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'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.

*(Casanova and Romeo look up at a light shining down on them. This light comes from the unseen balcony of Juliet. It is situated so that Casanova and Romeo are always facing toward the audience)*

ROMEO: But soft what light through yonder window breaks?

CASANOVA: Excuse me.

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

CASANOVA: *(gazes on the unseen 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 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.S.) 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: (O.S.) 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 : (O.S.) '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: (O.S.) 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: (O.S.) 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.

ROMEO: *(to Juliet)* And but thou love me, let them find me here:  
My life were better ended by their hate,  
Than death prolonged, wanting of thy love.

CASANOVA: Let me put this in words that even thou will understand. He who loves and  
runneth away lives to loveth another day.

JULIET: (O.S.) By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO: By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;  
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.

CASANOVA: Love... It will be the death of you yet my young friend.

ROMEO: I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far  
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,  
I would adventure for such merchandise.

CASANOVA: I grant thee the merchandise is first rate and if I were twenty years  
younger... *(looks up at Juliet)* Make that ten years younger... But, alas, I am not getting  
any younger and it is my desire to get a great deal older...

JULIET: 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!  
Dost thou love me?

CASANOVA: Ohhh... Tis a sucker's question.

JULIET: (O.S.) I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'  
And I will take thy word:

CASANOVA: Perfect... She thinks thee loves her but thee hasn't actually come out and  
declaimed so. See how it worketh? It keepeth the door open but giveth thee complete  
deniability. Now, let us scale the heights of yonder wall before...

JULIET: (O.S.) O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:

CASANOVA: Pronounce and thou wilt be entering territory from which no man hath yet returned.

JULIET: (O.S.) Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest  
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

CASANOVA: And on the breast reference we are out of here.

ROMEO: O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

CASANOVA: Thou may betteth your odd bodkin she wilt. It is called the promise of paradise.

JULIET: (O.S.) Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.

CASANOVA: Three words? The day I encounter a female who wilt limit herself to three words, is the day I take the vows of a monk.

JULIET: (O.S.) If that thy bent of love be honourable,  
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow

CASANOVA: Marriage?? Marriage?? What have I been telling thee? No hey nonny nonny until the ring is on the finger.

JULIET : (O.S.) 'Tis almost morning;

CASANOVA: (*looks around*) She's right. The sun doth rise. We must hurry from this place before her kinsmen separate our reproductive organs from our too, too solid flesh.

JULIET: (O.S.) Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow.

ROMEO: She sorrows over our parting.

CASANOVA: Good... Good... Always leave them wanting more.

JULIET(O.S.): That I shall say good night till it be morrow. (*The light goes out*)

CASANOVA: Finally.

OFFSTAGE VOICE: This way!!!

CASANOVA: The Capulets. Let us make haste, my young lord.

ROMEO: Has't thou ever been in love, Casanova?

CASANOVA: Let us talk while hauling our backsides over yon stony wall?

ROMEO: Has't thou?

CASANOVA: (*placatingly*) Yes. Yes. Once I loved.

ROMEO: I knew it. What was her name?

CASANOVA: I made a vow never to speak it. Let us hurry.

ROMEO: She must have rent your heart, terribly, if you cannot even speak her name.

CASANOVA: Like thou would'st not believe. Come.

ROMEO: Is that why thou art so protective of thine heart?

CASANOVA: Something like that.

ROMEO: If thou could'st love once, thou could'st love again.

CASANOVA: Perhaps, my young friend... Perhaps.

ROMEO: Open thy heart, my cynical friend and love will find thee as it has found me.

OFFSTAGE VOICE: Over here!!!

CASANOVA: But not if the Capulet's find us first.

ROMEO: Fear not the Capulets. We will soar high above their puny flighted darts.

CASANOVA: And just how will we achieve this?

ROMEO: 'Tis simple, my untrusting friend. We will fly on the wings of love. *(runs off)*

CASANOVA: Oh to be young and full of hope. Perhaps there is wisdom in what you say, my young friend. Perhaps I have hardened my heart and lost the joyfulness I knew once as a youth. Perhaps a life dedicated to seeking entrance to milady's boudoir is a life wasted and empty.

OFFSTAGE VOICE: This way!!!

*(A rope is dropped from the second balcony.)*

WOMAN'S VOICE: Oh, Casanova...

*(Casanova looks at the rope, looks off in the direction of the exiting Romeo, turns to the audience and smiles.)*

CASANOVA: But, on the other hand....

*(Casanova grabs the rope and starts to climb)*

BLACKOUT:

THE END