

# ROMEO AND JULIET | FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Shakespeare's language can seem scary, but give it a try! *Go at your own pace, and have fun!*



SHAKESPEARE IN PRISON

DETROIT PUBLIC THEATRE'S  
SIGNATURE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

## Romeo

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.  
It is my lady, O, it is my love!  
O, that she knew she were!  
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?  
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:  
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
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.  
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!

## (translation)

But wait, what's that light in the window over there? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Rise up, beautiful sun, and kill the jealous moon. The moon is already sick and pale with grief because you, Juliet, her maid, are more beautiful than she. Don't be her maid, because she is jealous. Innocence makes her look sick and green. Only fools hold on to their innocence. Let it go. Oh, there's my lady! Oh, it is my love. Oh, I wish she knew how much I love her. She's talking, but she's not saying anything. So what? Her eyes are saying something. I will answer them. I am too bold. She's not talking to me. Two of the brightest stars in the whole sky had to go away on business, and they're asking her eyes to twinkle in their places until they return. What if her eyes were in the sky and the stars were in her head?—The brightness of her cheeks would outshine the stars the way the sun outshines a lamp. If her eyes were in the night sky, they would shine so brightly through space that birds would start singing, thinking her light was the light of day. Look how she leans her hand on her cheek. Oh, I wish I was the glove on that hand so that I could touch that cheek.

- 1 Read Romeo's speech.**  
It's a little bit confusing, right?
- 2 Read the translation next to it.**
- 3 Read Romeo's speech again.**  
Does it make more sense now?

What words or images stick out to you (even if you don't know what they "mean")?

This is part of a play—someone is supposed to say it.

Try reading the speech aloud to yourself. Does it make more sense? Read it aloud again. Did it change for you?

Try reading it aloud to someone else. Or have someone else read it aloud to you. Does this feel different? How?

Try standing up and saying the speech to the window or your bunk or a spot on the wall. Does it feel different? How?

So you've read over Romeo's speech a bunch of times.

He uses a *lot* of words, right? Do you think you can help him get to the point? How would *you* say what he's saying?





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You can respond to these in any way you choose:

- Write
- Draw
- Talk about it
- Think about it

*M. Williams* *Shakespeare*

... up to you!

Romeo uses a lot of poetic images in the speech (Juliet is the sun, her eyes are like stars, her eyes are talking, he wants to turn into a glove...). Pick an image from the speech and draw it or write about it. Write a song or a rap or your OWN poem.. and perform it if you like!

An actor playing Romeo would memorize this speech. Often, having it all in your mind makes the words feel more natural. Sometimes, you'll see new meaning in the words, too. Give it a try!

Or just memorize a few lines—one complete thought, like:

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!

Or

It is my lady, O, it is my love!  
O, that she knew she were!  
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?  
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks.

People usually think of this scene as happening at a balcony... BORING!

Where do you see this scene happening? What's the setting?

Are Romeo and Juliet close together or far apart?

Are they outside? Inside?

In a city? In the country?

Go ahead: imagine it.

People sometimes say they "know" the characters they meet in Shakespeare's plays. Does Romeo remind you of anyone?

Romeo's just a kid. What advice do you have for him?

