

## SCENE 9

(Parallel to Scene 7 / 8)

/// Followed closely by both Paris and Lawrence, two guards drag the unconscious Romeo to a more private location and place him roughly against the wall.

### SCENE 9A

Paris releases the guards back to their stations.

PARIS

I thank thee, good Lawrence. Tis by your quick thought my Juliet is saved.  
How my heart did beat at a speed like light. Fear I the glint of his knife, that sickly silver,  
might forever plague mine eye.

LAWRENCE

Twas not an act of judgement, my lord. Twas pure animal.  
The hunters call, brought to mine surface by only the most vile of prey.

PARIS

A scoundrel, no doubt. And yet his speech makes me wonder...  
What could such a creature want with peace?  
What villain, such as he, could crave but a single prize?

LAWRENCE

All questions thou might ask, my lord, once he wakes.

PARIS

Yes. And by my blade I assure you, he shall speak truth.

Lawrence exits. █

Romeo begins to stir.

PARIS

Our Montague wakes.

ROMEO

Reluctantly, my lord.

PARIS

“My lord,” he speaks.  
Perchance thy wound knocked more than sense from thy bloodied skull.

ROMEO

Doubtful.

PARIS

Doubtful, indeed.

Thine actions this eve hath painted thou a villain, yet thy words speak only of forgiveness and peace. Either thou art some specter of Romeo, alike in all appearance yet blurred in intent, or thou art a devil for devil's sake — an arrow loosed with no mark, its only purpose pain.

ROMEO

Neither.

PARIS

“Neither.” Speakest thou “neither...”

Paris pushes Romeo heavily against the wall.

Who is Juliet in this?

What cruel notion hath forced her to the center of thy plot?

What part does she play in this bloody game?

ROMEO

(calmly and with balanced anger)

Hast thou seen, from my hand, a single drop of blood, Lord Paris?

(beat)

What falsehood hath I spoken? What harm has come to Juliet?

What game do I play?

PARIS

Thy knife speaks differently.

To sternum pressed, poised in the killing.

A sister to follow brother.

ROMEO

Tybalt was slain on the field of battle, Lord Paris.

My blade marked him as it marked many others.

If steel had slipped, perhaps thou would stand at mine own wake and not his.

The grave of Tybalt sinks deeper by name, not by fate.

Should blood be weighed, I suspect we two soldiers should be found equal.

PARIS

And Juliet?

(beat)

What wantest thou with Juliet? What excuse hast thou for the posture of thy knife?

ROMEO

None except my word. I should never have harmed Juliet.

PARIS

And I'm to take this on honor?

ROMEO

I have none else to give.

Lawrence enters, steps hurried.

LAWRENCE

Lord Paris. Tis Juliet.

PARIS

What news?

LAWRENCE

She's dead, my lord, her life swiftly ended by fear or grief or both.  
Get thee to her chambers, as our celebrations turn quickly to mourn.

PARIS

I shall follow.

Lawrence nods and exits.

Both Paris and Romeo sit in a shocked silence.

Paris turns to leave. Romeo leaps to grab his arm and is met with a blade to his chest.

ROMEO

Press further, Lord Paris.

I offer myself to thy steel.

What reckless cruelty have I enacted?

What crime of mine passion hath ended Juliet?

Release me, Lord Paris. Destroy this desperate being, that I might greet the face of death.

PARIS

Thou shalt find no such reward.

I, your accomplice in this wretched deed, do condemn you.

Thou feelest no true remorse. Thy game is lost, *my* life and love are ended.  
What ignorance of mine hath murdered Juliet?  
Live, oh unfortunate soul. Thou shalt live.

Paris leaves. \

Romeo sinks.