

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

By William Shakespeare

Edited by Tom Smith

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Dale AJ Rose who taught me how to understand Shakespeare, and to my classmates at Whitman College, who taught me how to perform it.

SUMMARY

Shakespeare's classic romantic comedy follows the adventures of best friends Valentine and Proteus and the intrigues that ensue when Proteus, engaged to Julia, falls in love with Valentine's beloved, Julia.

Reduced from the original 2 ½ hours to 45 minutes, this competition-length adaptation is for teachers who would like to present Shakespeare but feel intimidated to find ways to make it accessible to their students. This adaptation is fast, funny, easy to stage and easy to understand.

CHARACTERS

(4 m, 3 w, 7 flexible parts, some doubling possible)

Valentine, *one of the two gentlemen*

Proteus, *one of the two gentlemen*

Duke of Milan, *father to Silvia*

Antonio, *father to Proteus*

Thurio, *a foolish rival to Valentine*

Julia, *a lady of Verona, beloved to Proteus*

Silvia, *the Duke's daughter, beloved of Valentine*

Lucetta, *waiting-woman to Julia*

Flexible roles:

Speed, *a clownish servant to Valentine*

Launce, *servant to Proteus*

Panthino, *servant to Antonio*

Two Outlaws, *with Valentine*

Eglamour, *agent for Silvia in her escape*

Host, *where Julia lodges in Milan*

Musicians

SCENE I. Verona. An open place.

Enter VALENTINE and PROTEUS.

VALENTINE

Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus:
Were't not affection chains thy tender days
To the sweet glances of thy honour'd love,
I rather would entreat thy company
To see the wonders of the world abroad,
Than, living dully sluggardized at home.

PROTEUS

Wilt thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu!
Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest
Some rare note-worthy object in thy travel.

VALENTINE

To Milan let me hear from thee by letters
Of thy success in love.

PROTEUS

All happiness bechance to thee in Milan!

VALENTINE

As much to you at home! and so, farewell.

Exit Valentine.

PROTEUS

He after honour hunts, I after love.
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me,
Made me neglect my studies, heart sick with thought.

Enter SPEED.

SPEED

Sir Proteus, save you! Saw you my master?

PROTEUS

But now he parted hence, to embark for Milan.
Gavest thou my letter to Julia?

SPEED

Ay sir.

PROTEUS

What said she?

SPEED

Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her;
she's as hard as steel.

PROTEUS

What said she? nothing?

SPEED

No, not so much as 'Take this for thy pains.'
And so, sir, I'll commend you to my master.

PROTEUS

Go, go, be gone.

Exit SPEED.

I must go send some better messenger:
I fear my Julia would not deign my lines,
Receiving them from such a worthless post.

Exit.

SCENE II. Garden of JULIA's house.

Enter JULIA and LUCETTA.

JULIA

But say, Lucetta, now we are alone,
Wouldst thou then counsel me to fall in love?

LUCETTA

Ay, madam.

JULIA

What think'st thou of the gentle Proteus?

LUCETTA

I think him best.

JULIA

Your reason?

LUCETTA

I think him so because I think him so.

JULIA

He hath never moved me.

LUCETTA

Yet he, of all the rest, I think, best loves ye.

JULIA

I would I knew his mind.

LUCETTA

Peruse this paper, madam.

JULIA

'To Julia.' Say, from whom?

LUCETTA

Valentine's page; and sent, I think, from Proteus.

JULIA

Starts to read the letter. Sees LUCETTA looking on with interest.

This babble shall not trouble me.

Tears up the letter.

Go get you gone, and let the papers lie.

LUCETTA exits.

O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!
I'll kiss each several paper for amends.
Look, here is writ 'kind Julia.' Unkind Julia!
And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus.'
Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away
Till I have found each letter in the letter!

Re-enter LUCETTA.

LUCETTA

Madam, dinner is ready.

JULIA

Well, let us go.

LUCETTA

What, shall these papers lie like tell-tales here?

JULIA

If you respect them, best to take them up.

Exeunt.

End of Freeview

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