

William Shakespeare

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Dramatis Personae

Duke of Milan, father to Silvia

Valentine, one of the two gentlemen

Proteus

Antonio, father to Proteus

Thurio, a foolish rival to Valentine

Eglamour, agent for Silvia in her escape

Speed, a clownish servant to Valentine

Launce, the like to Proteus

Panthino, servant to Antonio

Host, where Julia lodges in Milan

Outlaws, with Valentine

Julia, a lady of Verona, beloved of Proteus

Silvia, the Duke's daughter, beloved of Valentine

Lucetta, waiting-woman to Julia

Servants, Musicians

Act I

Scene I

Verona. An open place.

Enter Valentine and Proteus.

Valentine

Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus:
Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.
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,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.
But since thou lovest, love still and thrive
therein,
Even as I would when I to love begin.

Proteus

Wilt thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu!
Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest
Some rare note-worthy object in thy travel:
Wish me partaker in thy happiness
When thou dost meet good hap; and in thy
danger,
If ever danger do environ thee,

Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers,
For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine.

Valentine

And on a love-book pray for my success?

Proteus

Upon some book I love I'll pray for thee.

Valentine

That's on some shallow story of deep love:
How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont.

Proteus

That's a deep story of a deeper love:
For he was more than over shoes in love.

Valentine

'Tis true; for you are over boots in love,
And yet you never swum the Hellespont.

Proteus

Over the boots? nay, give me not the boots.

Valentine

No, I will not, for it boots thee not.

Proteus

What?

Valentine

To be in love, where scorn is bought with
groans;
Coy looks with heart-sore sighs; one fading
moment's mirth
With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights:
If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain;
If lost, why then a grievous labour won;
However, but a folly bought with wit,
Or else a wit by folly vanquished.

Proteus

So, by your circumstance, you call me fool.

Valentine

So, by your circumstance, I fear you'll prove.

Proteus

'Tis love you cavil at: I am not Love.

Valentine

Love is your master, for he masters you:
And he that is so yoked by a fool,
Methinks, should not be chronicled for wise.

Proteus

Yet writers say, as in the sweetest bud
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

Valentine

And writers say, as the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turn'd to folly, blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime
And all the fair effects of future hopes.
But wherefore waste I time to counsel thee,
That art a votary to fond desire?
Once more adieu! my father at the road
Expects my coming, there to see me shipp'd.

Proteus

And thither will I bring thee, Valentine.

Valentine

Sweet Proteus, no; now let us take our leave.
To Milan let me hear from thee by letters
Of thy success in love, and what news else
Betideth here in absence of thy friend;
And likewise will visit thee with mine.

Proteus

All happiness bechance to thee in Milan!

Valentine

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

Exit.

Proteus

He after honour hunts, I after love:
He leaves his friends to dignify them more,
I leave myself, my friends and all, for love.
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me,
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,
War with good counsel, set the world at nought;
Made wit with musing weak, 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.

Speed

Twenty to one then he is shipp'd already,

And I have play'd the sheep in losing him.

Proteus

Indeed, a sheep doth very often stray,
An if the shepherd be a while away.

Speed

You conclude that my master is a shepherd,
then,
and I a sheep?

Proteus

I do.

Speed

Why then, my horns are his horns, whether I
wake or sleep.

Proteus

A silly answer and fitting well a sheep.

Speed

This proves me still a sheep.

Proteus

True; and thy master a shepherd.

Speed

Nay, that I can deny by a circumstance.

Proteus

It shall go hard but I'll prove it by another.

Speed

The shepherd seeks the sheep, and not the sheep
the
shepherd; but I seek my master, and my master
seeks
not me: therefore I am no sheep.

Proteus

The sheep for fodder follow the shepherd; the
shepherd for food follows not the sheep: thou
for
wages followest thy master; thy master for
wages
follows not thee: therefore thou art a sheep.

Speed

Such another proof will make me cry 'baa.'

Proteus

But, dost thou hear? gavest thou my letter to
Julia?

Speed

Ay sir: I, a lost mutton, gave your letter to her,
a laced mutton, and she, a laced mutton, gave
me, a
lost mutton, nothing for my labour.

Proteus

Here's too small a pasture for such store of
muttons.

Speed

If the ground be overcharged, you were best
stick her.

Proteus

Nay: in that you are astray, 'twere best pound
you.

Speed

Nay, sir, less than a pound shall serve me for
carrying your letter.

Proteus

You mistake; I mean the pound, — a pinfold.

Speed

From a pound to a pin? fold it over and over,
'Tis threefold too little for carrying a letter to

your lover.

Proteus

But what said she?

Speed [*First nodding*]

Ay.

Proteus

Nod-Ay-why, that's noddy.

Speed

You mistook, sir; I say, she did nod: and you
ask
me if she did nod; and I say, 'Ay.'

Proteus

And that set together is noddy.

Speed

Now you have taken the pains to set it together,
take it for your pains.

Proteus

No, no; you shall have it for bearing the letter.

Speed

Well, I perceive I must be fain to bear with you.

Proteus

Why sir, how do you bear with me?

Speed

Marry, sir, the letter, very orderly; having
nothing
but the word 'noddy' for my pains.

Proteus

Beshrew me, but you have a quick wit.

Speed

And yet it cannot overtake your slow purse.

Proteus

Come come, open the matter in brief: what said
she?

Speed

Open your purse, that the money and the matter
may
be both at once delivered.

Proteus

Well, sir, here is for your pains. What said she?

Speed

Truly, sir, I think you'll hardly win her.

Proteus

Why, couldst thou perceive so much from her?

Speed

Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her; no, not so much as a ducat for delivering your letter: and being so hard to me that brought your mind,

I

fear she'll prove as hard to you in telling your mind. Give her no token but stones; for she's as hard as steel.

Proteus

What said she? nothing?

Speed

No, not so much as 'Take this for thy pains.' To testify your bounty, I thank you, you have

testerned

me; in requital whereof, henceforth carry your letters yourself: and so, sir, I'll commend you to

my master.

Proteus

Go, go, be gone, to save your ship from wreck,
Which cannot perish having thee aboard,
Being destined to a drier death on shore.

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

*The same. Garden of Julia's house.
Enter Julla and Lucetta.*

Julia

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

Lucetta

Ay, madam, so you stumble not unheedfully.

Julia

Of all the fair resort of gentlemen
That every day with parle encounter me,
In thy opinion which is worthiest love?

Lucetta

Please you repeat their names, I'll show my
mind

According to my shallow simple skill.

Julia

What think'st thou of the fair Sir Eglamour?

Lucetta

As of a knight well-spoken, neat and fine;
But, were I you, he never should be mine.

Julia

What think'st thou of the rich Mercatio?

Lucetta

Well of his wealth; but of himself, so so.

Julia

What think'st thou of the gentle Proteus?

Lucetta

Lord, Lord! to see what folly reigns in us!

Julia

How now! what means this passion at his name?

Lucetta

Pardon, dear madam: 'tis a passing shame
That I, unworthy body as I am,
Should censure thus on lovely gentlemen.

Julia

Why not on Proteus, as of all the rest?

Lucetta

Then thus: of many good I think him best.

Julia

Your reason?

Lucetta

I have no other, but a woman's reason;
I think him so because I think him so.

Julia

And wouldst thou have me cast my love on
him?

Lucetta

Ay, if you thought your love not cast away.

Julia

Why he, of all the rest, hath never moved me.

Lucetta

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

Julia

His little speaking shows his love but small.

Lucetta

Fire that's closest kept burns most of all.

Julia

They do not love that do not show their love.

Lucetta

O, they love least that let men know their love.

Julia

I would I knew his mind.

Lucetta

Peruse this paper, madam.

Julia

'To Julia.' Say, from whom?

Lucetta

That the contents will show.

Julia

Say, say, who gave it thee?

Lucetta

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

He would have given it you; but I, being in the

way,
Did in your name receive it: pardon the
fault I pray.

Julia

Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker!
Dare you presume to harbour wanton lines?
To whisper and conspire against my youth?
Now, trust me, 'tis an office of great worth
And you an officer fit for the place.
Or else return no more into my sight.

Lucetta

To plead for love deserves more fee than hate.

Julia

Will ye be gone?

Lucetta

That you may ruminare.

Exit.

Julia

And yet I would I had o'erlooked the letter:
It were a shame to call her back again
And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.
What a fool is she, that knows I am a maid,

And would not force the letter to my view!
Since maids, in modesty, say 'no' to that
Which they would have the profferer construe
'ay.'

Fie, fie, how wayward is this foolish love
That, like a testy babe, will scratch the nurse
And presently all humbled kiss the rod!
How churlishly I chid Lucetta hence,
When willingly I would have had her here!
How angerly I taught my brow to frown,
When inward joy enforced my heart to smile!
My penance is to call Lucetta back
And ask remission for my folly past.
What ho! Lucetta!

Re-enter Lucetta.

Lucetta

What would your ladyship?

Julia

Is't near dinner-time?

Lucetta

I would it were,
That you might kill your stomach on your meat
And not upon your maid.

Julia

What is't that you took up so gingerly?

Lucetta

Nothing.

Julia

Why didst thou stoop, then?

Lucetta

To take a paper up that I let fall.

Julia

And is that paper nothing?

Lucetta

Nothing concerning me.

Julia

Then let it lie for those that it concerns.

Lucetta

Madam, it will not lie where it concerns
Unless it have a false interpeter.

Julia

Some love of yours hath writ to you in rhyme.

Lucetta

That I might sing it, madam, to a tune.
Give me a note: your ladyship can set.

Julia

As little by such toys as may be possible.
Best sing it to the tune of 'Light o' love.'

Lucetta

It is too heavy for so light a tune.

Julia

Heavy! belike it hath some burden then?

Lucetta

Ay, and melodious were it, would you sing it.

Julia

And why not you?

Lucetta

I cannot reach so high.

Julia

Let's see your song. How now, minion!

Lucetta

Keep tune there still, so you will sing it out:

And yet methinks I do not like this tune.

Julia

You do not?

Lucetta

No, madam; it is too sharp.

Julia

You, minion, are too saucy.

Lucetta

Nay, now you are too flat
And mar the concord with too harsh a descant:
There wanteth but a mean to fill your song.

Julia

The mean is drown'd with your unruly bass.

Lucetta

Indeed, I bid the base for Proteus.

Julia

This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.
Here is a coil with protestation!

Tears the letter.

Go get you gone, and let the papers lie:
You would be fingering them, to anger me.

Lucetta

She makes it strange; but she would be best
pleased
To be so anger'd with another letter.

Exit.

Julia

Nay, would I were so anger'd with the same!
O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!
Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey
And kill the bees that yield it with your stings!
I'll kiss each several paper for amends.
Look, here is writ 'kind Julia.' Unkind Julia!
As in revenge of thy ingratitude,
I throw thy name against the bruising stones,
Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain.
And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus.'
Poor wounded name! my bosom as a bed
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly
heal'd;
And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.
But twice or thrice was 'Proteus' written down.
Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away
Till I have found each letter in the letter,

Except mine own name: that some whirlwind
bear
Unto a ragged fearful-hanging rock
And throw it thence into the raging sea!
Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ,
'Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus,
To the sweet Julia:' that I'll tear away.
And yet I will not, sith so prettily
He couples it to his complaining names.
Thus will I fold them one on another:
Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

Re-enter Lucetta.

Lucetta

Madam,
Dinner is ready, and your father stays.

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.

Lucetta

Nay, I was taken up for laying them down:
Yet here they shall not lie, for catching cold.

Julia

I see you have a month's mind to them.

Lucetta

Ay, madam, you may say what sights you see;
I see things too, although you judge I wink.

Julia

Come, come; will't please you go?

Exeunt.

Scene III

*The same. Antonio's house.
Enter Antonio and Panthino.*

Antonio

Tell me, Panthino, what sad talk was that
Wherewith my brother held you in the cloister?

Panthino

'Twas of his nephew Proteus, your son.

Antonio

Why, what of him?

Panthino

He wonder'd that your lordship
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,
While other men, of slender reputation,
Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:
Some to the wars, to try their fortune there;
Some to discover islands far away;
Some to the studious universities.
For any or for all these exercises,
He said that Proteus your son was meet,
And did request me to importune you
To let him spend his time no more at home,
Which would be great impeachment to his age,
In having known no travel in his youth.

Antonio

Nor need'st thou much importune me to that
Whereon this month I have been hammering.
I have consider'd well his loss of time
And how he cannot be a perfect man,
Not being tried and tutor'd in the world:
Experience is by industry achieved
And perfected by the swift course of time.
Then tell me, whither were I best to send him?

Panthino

I think your lordship is not ignorant
How his companion, youthful Valentine,
Attends the emperor in his royal court.

Antonio

I know it well.

Panthino

'Twere good, I think, your lordship sent him
thither:
There shall he practise tilts and tournaments,
Hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen.
And be in eye of every exercise
Worthy his youth and nobleness of birth.

Antonio

I like thy counsel; well hast thou advised:
And that thou mayst perceive how well I like it,
The execution of it shall make known.
Even with the speediest expedition
I will dispatch him to the emperor's court.

Panthino

To-morrow, may it please you, Don Alphonso,
With other gentlemen of good esteem,
Are journeying to salute the emperor
And to commend their service to his will.

Antonio

Good company; with them shall Proteus go:
And, in good time! now will we break with him.

Enter Proteus.

Proteus

Sweet love! sweet lines! sweet life!
Here is her hand, the agent of her heart;
Here is her oath for love, her honour's pawn.
O, that our fathers would applaud our loves,
To seal our happiness with their consents!
O heavenly Julia!

Antonio

How now! what letter are you reading there?

Proteus

May't please your lordship, 'tis a word or two
Of commendations sent from Valentine,
Deliver'd by a friend that came from him.

Antonio

Lend me the letter; let me see what news.

Proteus

There is no news, my lord, but that he writes
How happily he lives, how well beloved

And daily graced by the emperor;
Wishing me with him, partner of his fortune.

Antonio

And how stand you affected to his wish?

Proteus

As one relying on your lordship's will
And not depending on his friendly wish.

Antonio

My will is something sorted with his wish.
Muse not that I thus suddenly proceed;
For what I will, I will, and there an end.
I am resolved that thou shalt spend some time
With Valentinus in the emperor's court:
What maintenance he from his friends receives,
Like exhibition thou shalt have from me.
To-morrow be in readiness to go:
Excuse it not, for I am peremptory.

Proteus

My lord, I cannot be so soon provided:
Please you, deliberate a day or two.

Antonio

Look, what thou want'st shall be sent after thee:
No more of stay! to-morrow thou must go.

Come on, Panthino: you shall be employ'd
To hasten on his expedition.

Exeunt Antonio and Panthino.

Proteus

Thus have I shunn'd the fire for fear of burning,
And drench'd me in the sea, where I am
drown'd.

I fear'd to show my father Julia's letter,
Lest he should take exceptions to my love;
And with the vantage of mine own excuse
Hath he excepted most against my love.
O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day,
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away!

Re-enter Panthino.

Panthino

Sir Proteus, your father calls for you:
He is in haste; therefore, I pray you to go.

Proteus

Why, this it is: my heart accords thereto,
And yet a thousand times it answers 'no.'

Exeunt.

Act II

Scene I

*Milan. The Duke's palace.
Enter Valentine and Speed.*

Speed

Sir, your glove.

Valentine

Not mine; my gloves are on.

Speed

Why, then, this may be yours, for this is but
one.

Valentine

Ha! let me see: ay, give it me, it's mine:
Sweet ornament that decks a thing divine!
Ah, Silvia, Silvia!

Speed

Madam Silvia! Madam Silvia!

Valentine

How now, sirrah?

Speed

She is not within hearing, sir.

Valentine

Why, sir, who bade you call her?

Speed

Your worship, sir; or else I mistook.

Valentine

Well, you'll still be too forward.

Speed

And yet I was last chidden for being too slow.

Valentine

Go to, sir: tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?

Speed

She that your worship loves?

Valentine

Why, how know you that I am in love?

Speed

Marry, by these special marks: first, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms, like a malecontent; to relish a love-song, like a

robin-redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had
the pestilence; to sigh, like a school-boy that
had
lost his A B C; to weep, like a young wench that
had
buried her grandam; to fast, like one that takes
diet; to watch like one that fears robbing; to
speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas. You
were
wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock;
when you
walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you
fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you
looked sadly, it was for want of money: and
now you
are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I
look
on you, I can hardly think you my master.

Valentine

Are all these things perceived in me?

Speed

They are all perceived without ye.

Valentine

Without me? they cannot.

Speed

Without you? nay, that's certain, for, without
you
were so simple, none else would: but you are so
without these follies, that these follies are within
you and shine through you like the water in an
urinal, that not an eye that sees you but is a
physician to comment on your malady.

Valentine

But tell me, dost thou know my lady Silvia?

Speed

She that you gaze on so as she sits at supper?

Valentine

Hast thou observed that? even she, I mean.

Speed

Why, sir, I know her not.

Valentine

Dost thou know her by my gazing on her, and
yet
knowest her not?

Speed

Is she not hard-favoured, sir?