

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00610-1 - The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Volume 38

William Shakespeare

Excerpt

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THE TWO GENTLEMEN
OF VERONA

T.G.V. – 2

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The scene: Verona, Milan and a forest
near Milan

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

DUKE OF MILAN, *father to Silvia*

VALENTINE }
PROTEUS } *the two gentlemen*

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*

Outlaws, *with Valentine*

JULIA, *beloved of Proteus*

SILVIA, *beloved of Valentine*

LUCETTA, *waiting-woman to Julia*

Servants, musicians

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[1. 1.] *Verona: a street near Julia's house;
trees and a seat*

VALENTINE, dressed for a journey: 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 honoured 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 lov'st; love still and thrive therein,

Even as I would when I to love begin.

10

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.

20

Valentine. That's on some shallow story of deep love,
How young Leander crossed 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 swam the Hellespont.

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4 THE TWO GENTLEMEN I. I. 27

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

30 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;

How ever...but a folly bought with wit,

Or else a wit by folly vanquishéd.

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;

40 And he that is so yokéd 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

Inhabs 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 turned to folly—blasting in the bud,

Losing his verdure even in the prime,

50 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 shipped.

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

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1.1.58

OF VERONA

5

Of thy success in love; and what news else

Betideth here in absence of thy friend:

And I likewise will visit thee with mine.

60

Proteus. All happiness bechance to thee in Milan.*Valentine.* As much to you at home: and so, farewell.*[they embrace and Valentine goes his way]**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.

*SPEED runs up breathless, carrying luggage**Speed.* Sir Proteus... 'save you... saw you my master? 70*Proteus.* But now he parted hence to embark for Milan.*Speed.* Twenty to one then he is shipped already,
And I have played the sheep in losing him.*Proteus.* Indeed a sheep doth very often stray,
An if the shepherd be awhile 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. 80*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.

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6 THE TWO GENTLEMEN I. I. 87

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
90 thee: therefore thou art a sheep.

Speed. Such another proof will make me cry 'baa.'

Proteus. But dost thou hear? gav'st 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
100 stick her.

Proteus. Nay, in that you are a-stray... '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 pinfeld.

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 nods*] Nod?

Speed. Ay.

110 *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
120 but the word 'noddy' for my pains.

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I. I. 121

OF VERONA

7

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: [*giving him money*] here is for your pains...What said she?*Speed* [*eyeing the coin with contempt*]. Truly sir, I think you'll hardly win her. 130*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* [*dryly*]. 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. 140*Proteus* [*angry*]. Go, go, be gone, to save your ship from wrack,Which cannot perish having thee aboard,
Being destined to a drier death on shore...

I must go send some better messenger.

I fear my Julia would not deign my lines,

Receiving them from such a worthless post. [*he goes*][I. 2.] *A door opens: JULIA and LUCETTA come forth**Julia.* But say, Lucetta—now we are alone—
Wouldst thou then counsel me to fall in love?

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8 THE TWO GENTLEMEN 1.2.3

Lucetta. Ay madam, so you stumble not unheedfully.*Julia* [*sits*]. 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?10 *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* [*looks down*]. What think'st thou of the gentle
Proteus?*Lucetta.* Lord, lord...to see what folly reigns in us!*Julia* [*sharply*]. How now! what means this passion at
his name?*Lucetta* [*demure*]. Pardon, dear madam—'tis a pass-
ing shame,That I (unworthy body as I am!)
Should censure thus on lovely gentlemen.20 *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.30 *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

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1.2.33

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Julia. I would, I knew his mind.*Lucetta.* Peruse this paper, madam. [*Julia takes it**Julia.* 'To Julia'...Say, from whom?*Lucetta.* That the contents will show.*Julia.* Say, say...who gave it thee?*Lucetta.* Sir Valentine's page: and sent,
I think, from Proteus;

He would have given it you, but I, being in the way, 40

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

Julia [*feigns anger*]. 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... [*holding out the letter*

There...take the paper...see it be returned,

Or else return no more into my sight.

Lucetta. To plead for love deserves more fee than hate.*Julia* [*stamps*]. Will you be gone?*Lucetta* [*going within*]. That you may ruminate. 50*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 '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! 60

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!

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10 THE TWO GENTLEMEN 1.2.65

My penance is, to call Lucetta back
 And ask remission for my folly past....
 What ho! Lucetta!

LUCETTA returning, drops the letter

Lucetta. What would your ladyship?

Julia. Is it near dinner-time?

Lucetta. I would it were—

That you might kill your stomach on your meat,
 70 And not upon your maid. [*she takes up the letter*]

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 interpreter.

Julia. Some love of yours hath writ to you in rhyme.

Lucetta. That I might sing it, madam, to a tune...

80 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...

*She snatches at the letter; Lucetta hastily
 hides it behind her back, and runs*

How now, minion! [*giving chase*]