

# 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?

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