



The Two Gentlemen of Verona

William Shakespeare

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PUBLISHER NOTES:

Quality of Life, Freedom, More time with the ones you Love.

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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