

# *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

By William Shakespeare

## **Characters in the Play**

VALENTINE, a gentleman of Verona

PROTEUS, a gentleman of Verona

ANTONIO, Proteus' father

JULIA, a lady of Verona

LUCETTA, her waiting-gentlewoman

SYLVIA, a lady of Milan

DUKE (sometimes Emperor), Sylvia's father

THURIO, a gentleman

EGLAMOUR, a gentleman

## ***ACT 1***

### **Scene 1**

*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 honored 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.

PROTEUS

Wilt thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu.  
Think on thy Proteus when thou haply seest  
Some rare noteworthy 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.

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 yokèd 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 turned 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 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  
Of thy success in love, and what news else  
Betideth here in absence of thy friend.  
And I likewise will visit thee with mine.

PROTEUS

All happiness bechance to thee in Milan.

VALENTINE

As much to you at home. And so farewell.     *He exits.*

PROTEUS

He after honor 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.

## Scene 2

*Enter Julia and Lucetta.*

JULIA

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

LUCETTA

Ay, Julia, 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 kind 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, my dear friend, 'tis a passing shame

That I should censure thus on the 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 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 you.

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.

I would I knew his mind.

LUCETTA, *handing her a paper* Peruse this paper,  
then.

JULIA *reads* "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,  
Did in your name receive it. Pardon the fault, I pray.

JULIA

Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker!  
Now trust me, 'tis an office of great worth,  
And you an officer fit for the place.  
There, take the paper; see it be returned,  
Or else return no more into my sight.

LUCETTA, *taking the paper*

To plead for love deserves more fee than hate.

JULIA

Will you be gone?

LUCETTA That you may ruminare. *She exits.*

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"!  
How churlishly I chid Lucetta hence,  
When willingly I would have had her here!  
How angrily 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!

*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 mate.

*She drops a paper and then retrieves it.*

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

This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.

Here is a coil with protestation.

*She rips up the paper*

Go, get you gone, and let the papers lie.

LUCETTA

She makes it strange, but she would be best pleased

To be so angered with another letter. *She exits.*

JULIA

Nay, would I were so angered with the same!

O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!

I'll kiss each several paper for amends.

*She picks up some pieces.*

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 healed.

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 upon another.  
Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

*Enter Lucetta.*

LUCETTA

What, shall these papers lie like telltales here?

JULIA

If you respect them, best to take them up.

LUCETTA

Nay, I was taken up for laying them down.

JULIA Come, come, will ’t please you go?

*They exit.*

### **Scene 3**

*Enter Antonio and Pantino.*

ANTONIO

Nor need’st thou much importune me to that  
Whereon this month I have been hammering.  
I have considered well his loss of time  
And how he cannot be a perfect man,  
Not being tried and tutored 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.

PANTINO

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

ANTONIO I know it well.

PANTINO

'Twere good, I think, your Lordship sent him thither.  
There shall he practice 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.

PANTINO

Tomorrow, may it please you, Antonio,  
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.

*Enter Proteus reading.*

And in good time! Now will we break with him.

PROTEUS, *to himself*

Sweet love, sweet lines, sweet life!  
Here is her hand, the agent of her heart;

Here is her oath for love, her honor'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,  
Delivered 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 gracèd 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.  
Tomorrow 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. Tomorrow thou must go.—

Come on, Pantino; you shall be employed

To hasten on his expedition.

*Antonio and Pantino exit.*

PROTEUS

Thus have I shunned the fire for fear of burning

And drenched me in the sea, where I am drowned.

I feared 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.

*Enter Pantino.*

PANTINO

Sir Proteus, your father calls for you.

He is in haste. Therefore, I pray you, go.

PROTEUS

Why, this it is: my heart accords thereto.

*Aside.* And yet a thousand times it answers "no."

*They exit.*

## *ACT 2*

### **Scene 1**

*Enter Valentine.*

VALENTINE

Sweet ornament that decks a thing divine!

Ah, Sylvia, Sylvia!

Last night she enjoined me to write some  
lines to one she loves.

Peace, here she comes.

*Enter Sylvia.*

VALENTINE Madam and mistress, a thousand  
good-morrows.

SYLVIA Sir Valentine, to you two  
thousand.

VALENTINE

As you enjoined me, I have writ your letter  
Unto the secret, nameless friend of yours,  
Which I was much unwilling to proceed in  
But for my duty to your Ladyship.

*He gives her a paper.*

SYLVIA

I thank you, gentle servant, 'tis very clerkly done.

VALENTINE

Now trust me, madam, it came hardly off,  
For, being ignorant to whom it goes,  
I writ at random, very doubtfully.

SYLVIA

Perchance you think too much of so much pains?

VALENTINE

No, madam. So it stead you, I will write,  
Please you command, a thousand times as much,  
And yet—

SYLVIA

A pretty period. Well, I guess the sequel;  
And yet I will not name it And yet I care not.  
And yet take this again. *She holds out the paper.*  
And yet I thank you,  
Meaning henceforth to trouble you no more.

VALENTINE

What means your Ladyship? Do you not like it?

SYLVIA

Yes, yes, the lines are very quaintly writ,  
But, since unwillingly, take them again.  
Nay, take them. *She again offers him the paper.*

VALENTINE Madam, they are for you.

SYLVIA

Ay, ay. You writ them, sir, at my request,  
But I will none of them. They are for you.  
I would have had them writ more movingly.

VALENTINE, *taking the paper*

Please you, I'll write your Ladyship another.

SYLVIA

And when it's writ, for my sake read it over,  
And if it please you, so; if not, why, so.

VALENTINE If it please me, madam? What then?

SYLVIA

Why, if it please you, take it for your labor.

*Aside*

O jest unseen, inscrutable, invisible

As a nose on a man's face, or a weathercock on a  
steeple!

Valentine sues to me, and I hath taught my  
suitor,

He being my pupil, to become my tutor.

O excellent device! Was there ever heard a better?

That Valentine, being scribe, to himself should  
write the letter?

VALENTINE How now, miss? What, are you reasoning  
with yourself?

SYLVIA Nay, I was rhyming. 'Tis you that have the  
reason.

VALENTINE To do what?

SYLVIA To be a spokesman from Madam Sylvia.

VALENTINE To whom?

SYLVIA To yourself. Why, I woo you by a figure.

VALENTINE What figure?

SYLVIA By a letter, I should say.

VALENTINE Why, you hath not writ to me!

SYLVIA What need I when I hath made you write  
to yourself? Why, do you not perceive the jest?

VALENTINE No, believe me.

SYLVIA No believing you indeed, sir. But did you perceive my earnest?

VALENTINE You gave me none, except an angry word.

SYLVIA Why, I hath given you a letter.

VALENTINE That's the letter I writ to your friend.

SYLVIA And that letter hath I delivered, and there an  
end.

*Sylvia exits.*

VALENTINE I would it were no worse.

I'll warrant you, 'tis as well.

For often have I writ to her, and she, in modesty

Or else for want of idle time, could not again reply,  
Or fearing else some messenger that might her  
mind discover,  
Herself hath taught her love himself to write unto  
her lover.

All this I speak in print, for in print I found it!

*Valentine exits.*

## Scene 2

*Enter Proteus and Julia.*

PROTEUS Have patience, gentle Julia.

JULIA I must where is no remedy.

PROTEUS

When possibly I can, I will return.

JULIA

If you turn not, you will return the sooner.

Keep this remembrance for thy Julia's sake.

*She gives him a ring.*

PROTEUS, *giving her a ring*

Why, then we'll make exchange. Here, take you this.

JULIA

And seal the bargain with a holy kiss.

PROTEUS

Here is my hand for my true constancy.

And when that hour o'erslips me in the day

Wherein I sigh not, Julia, for thy sake,

The next ensuing hour some foul mischance

Torment me for my love's forgetfulness.

My father stays my coming. Answer not.

The tide is now—nay, not thy tide of tears;

That tide will stay me longer than I should.

Julia, farewell.

*Julia exits.*

What, gone without a word?

Ay, so true love should do. It cannot speak,

For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.

*Pantino Offstage.*

PANTINO Sir Proteus, you are stayed for.

PROTEUS Go. I come, I come.

*Aside.* Alas, this parting strikes poor lovers dumb.

*They exit.*

#### Scene 4

*Enter Valentine, Sylvia, and Thurio.*

SYLVIA Valentine!

VALENTINE Mistress?

SYLVIA Sir Thurio frowns on you.

VALENTINE Ay, dear, it's for love.

SYLVIA Not of you.

VALENTINE Of my mistress, then.

SYLVIA, *to Valentine* You are sad.

VALENTINE Indeed, madam, I seem so.

THURIO Seem you that you are not?

VALENTINE Haply I do.

THURIO So do counterfeits.

VALENTINE So do you.

THURIO What seem I that I am not?

VALENTINE Wise.

THURIO What instance of the contrary?

VALENTINE Your folly.

THURIO And how quote you my folly?

VALENTINE I quote it in your jerkin.

THURIO My “jerkin” is a doublet.

VALENTINE Well, then, I’ll double your folly.

THURIO How!

SYLVIA What, angry, Sir Thurio? Do you change color?

VALENTINE Give him leave, madam. He is a kind of  
chameleon.

THURIO That hath more mind to feed on your blood  
than live in your air.

VALENTINE You have said, sir.

THURIO Ay, sir, and done too for this time.

VALENTINE I know it well, sir. You always end ere you  
begin.

SYLVIA A fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly  
shot off.

VALENTINE ’Tis indeed, madam. We thank the giver.

SYLVIA Who is that, dear lord?

VALENTINE Yourself, sweet lady, for you gave the fire.  
Sir Thurio borrows his wit from your Ladyship’s  
looks and spends what he borrows kindly in your  
company.

THURIO Sir, if you spend word for word with me, I shall  
make your wit bankrupt.

VALENTINE I know it well, sir. You have an exchequer  
of words and, I think, no other treasure to give your  
followers, for it appears by their bare liveries that  
they live by your bare words.

SYLVIA

No more, gentlemen, no more. Here comes my  
father.

*Enter Duke.*

DUKE

Now, daughter Sylvia, you are hard beset.—  
Sir Valentine, your father is in good health.  
What say you to a letter from your friends  
Of much good news?

VALENTINE My lord, I will be thankful

To any happy messenger from thence.

DUKE

Know you Don Antonio, your countryman?

VALENTINE

Ay, my good lord, I know the gentleman  
To be of worth and worthy estimation.

DUKE Hath he not a son?

VALENTINE

Ay, my good lord, a son that well deserves  
The honor and regard of such a father.

DUKE You know him well?

VALENTINE

I knew him as myself, for from our infancy  
We have conversed and spent our hours together.  
Yea hath Sir Proteus—for that's his name—  
Made use and fair advantage of his days:  
His years but young, but his experience old;  
His head unmellowed, but his judgment ripe;  
And in a word—for far behind his worth  
Comes all the praises that I now bestow—  
He is complete in feature and in mind,  
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

DUKE

Beshrew me, sir, but if he make this good,

He is as worthy for an empress' love,  
As meet to be an emperor's counselor.  
Well, sir, this gentleman is come to me  
With commendation from great potentates,  
And here he means to spend his time awhile.  
I think 'tis no unwelcome news to you.

VALENTINE

Should I have wished a thing, it had been he.

DUKE

Welcome him then according to his worth.  
Sylvia, I speak to you—and you, Sir Thurio.  
For Valentine, I need not cite him to it.  
I will send him hither to you presently.      *Duke exits.*

VALENTINE

This is the gentleman I told your Ladyship  
Had come along with me but that his mistress  
Did hold his eyes locked in her crystal looks.

SYLVIA

Belike that now she hath enfranchised them  
Upon some other pawn for fealty.

VALENTINE

Nay, sure, I think she holds them prisoners still.

SYLVIA

Nay, then, he should be blind, and being blind  
How could he see his way to seek out you?

VALENTINE

Why, lady, love hath twenty pair of eyes.

THURIO

They say that Love hath not an eye at all.

VALENTINE

To see such lovers, Thurio, as yourself.

Upon a homely object, Love can wink.

SYLVIA

Have done, have done. Here comes the gentleman.

*Enter Proteus.*

VALENTINE

Welcome, dear Proteus.—Mistress, I beseech you

Confirm his welcome with some special favor.

SYLVIA

His worth is warrant for his welcome hither,

If this be he you oft have wished to hear from.

VALENTINE

Mistress, it is. Sweet lady, entertain him

To be my fellow-servant to your Ladyship.

SYLVIA

Too low a mistress for so high a servant.

PROTEUS

Not so, sweet lady, but too mean a servant

To have a look of such a worthy mistress.

VALENTINE

Leave off discourse of disability.

Sweet lady, entertain him for your servant.

PROTEUS

My duty will I boast of, nothing else.

SYLVIA

And duty never yet did want his meed.

Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.

PROTEUS

I'll die on him that says so but yourself.

SYLVIA That you are welcome?

PROTEUS That you are worthless.

THURIO

Madam, my lord your father would speak with you.

SYLVIA

I wait upon his pleasure. Come, Sir Thurio,  
Go with me.—Once more, new servant, welcome.  
I'll leave you to confer of home affairs.  
When you have done, we look to hear from you.

PROTEUS

We'll both attend upon your Ladyship.

*Sylvia and Thurio exit.*

VALENTINE

Now tell me, how do all from whence you came?  
How does your lady? And how thrives your love?

PROTEUS

My tales of love were wont to weary you.  
I know you joy not in a love discourse.

VALENTINE

Ay, Proteus, but that life is altered now.  
I have done penance for contemning Love,  
Whose high imperious thoughts have punished me  
With bitter fasts, with penitential groans,  
With nightly tears, and daily heartsore sighs.  
For in revenge of my contempt of love,  
Love hath chased sleep from my enthralled eyes  
And made them watchers of mine own heart's  
sorrow.  
O gentle Proteus, Love's a mighty lord  
And hath so humbled me as I confess  
There is no woe to his correction,  
Nor, to his service, no such joy on Earth.  
Now, no discourse except it be of love.

Now can I break my fast, dine, sup, and sleep  
Upon the very naked name of Love.

PROTEUS

Enough; I read your fortune in your eye.  
Was this the idol that you worship so?

VALENTINE

Even she. And is she not a heavenly saint?

PROTEUS

No, but she is an earthly paragon.

VALENTINE

Call her divine.

PROTEUS I will not flatter her.

VALENTINE

O, flatter me, for love delights in praises.

PROTEUS

When I was sick, you gave me bitter pills,  
And I must minister the like to you.

VALENTINE

Then speak the truth by her; if not divine,  
Yet let her be a principality,  
Sovereign to all the creatures on the Earth.

PROTEUS

Except my mistress.

VALENTINE Sweet, except not any,

Except thou wilt except against my love.

PROTEUS

Have I not reason to prefer mine own?  
Why, Valentine, what braggartism is this?

VALENTINE

Pardon me, Proteus, all I can is nothing  
To her whose worth makes other worthies

nothing.

She is alone—

PROTEUS Then let her alone.

VALENTINE

Not for the world! Why, man, she is mine own,  
And I as rich in having such a jewel  
As twenty seas if all their sand were pearl,  
The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.  
My foolish rival, that her father likes  
Only for his possessions are so huge,  
Is gone with her along, and I must after,  
For love, thou know'st, is full of jealousy.

PROTEUS But she loves you?

VALENTINE

Ay, and we are betrothed; nay more, our marriage  
hour,  
With all the cunning manner of our flight  
Determined of: how I must climb her window,  
The ladder made of cords, and all the means  
Plotted and 'greed on for my happiness.  
Good Proteus, go with me to my chamber,  
In these affairs to aid me with thy counsel.

PROTEUS

Go on before. I shall inquire you forth.  
I must unto the road to disembark  
Some necessaries that I needs must use,  
And then I'll presently attend you.

VALENTINE Will you make haste?

PROTEUS I will.

*Valentine exits.*

Even as one heat another heat expels,  
Or as one nail by strength drives out another,

So the remembrance of my former love  
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.  
Is it mine eye, or Valentine's praise,  
Her true perfection, or my false transgression,  
That makes me reasonless to reason thus?  
She is good, and so is Julia that I love—  
That I did love, for now my love is thawed,  
Which like a waxen image 'gainst a fire  
Bears no impression of the thing it was.  
Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold,  
And that I love him not as I was wont.  
O, but I love his lady too too much,  
And that's the reason I love him so little.  
'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,  
And that hath dazzled my reason's light;  
But when I look on her perfections,  
There is no reason but I shall be blind.  
If I can check my erring love, I will;  
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill.

## Scene 6

*Enter Julia and Lucetta.*

JULIA

Counsel, Lucetta. Gentle girl, assist me;  
And ev'n in kind love I do conjure thee—  
Who art the table wherein all my thoughts  
Are visibly characterized and engraved—  
To lesson me and tell me some good mean  
How with my honor I may undertake  
A journey to my loving Proteus.

PROTEUS

To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn.  
To love good Sylvia, shall I be forsworn.  
To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn.  
And ev'n that power which gave me first my oath  
Provokes me to this threefold perjury.  
Love bade me swear, and love bids me forswear.

LUCETTA

Alas, the way is wearisome and long.

JULIA

A true-devoted pilgrim is not weary  
To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps;  
Much less shall she that hath Love's wings to fly,  
And when the flight is made to one so dear,  
Of such divine perfection, as Sir Proteus.

PROTEUS

At first I did adore a twinkling star,  
But now I worship a celestial sun;  
Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken,  
And he wants wit that wants resolvèd will  
To learn his wit t' exchange the bad for better.

LUCETTA

Better forbear till Proteus make return.

JULIA

O, know'st thou not his looks are my soul's food?  
Pity the dearth that I have pinèd in  
By longing for that food so long a time.

PROTEUS

Fie, fie, unreverend tongue, to call her bad  
Whose sovereignty so oft thou hast preferred  
With twenty thousand soul-confirming oaths.

I cannot leave to love.

JULIA

Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,  
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow  
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.

PROTEUS

And yet I do.

LUCETTA

I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,  
But qualify the fire's extreme rage,  
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

PROTEUS

Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose;  
If I keep them, I needs must lose myself;

JULIA

The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns.  
The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou know'st, being stopped, impatiently doth rage.

PROTEUS

If I lose them, thus find I by their loss:  
For Valentine, myself; for Julia, Sylvia.

JULIA

But when his fair course is not hinderèd,  
He makes sweet music with th' enameled stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;  
And so by many winding nooks he strays  
With willing sport to the wild ocean.

PROTEUS

I to myself am dearer than a friend,  
For love is still most precious in itself.

JULIA

Then let me go and hinder not my course.  
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream  
And make a pastime of each weary step  
Till the last step have brought me to my love,  
And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil  
A blessèd soul doth in Elysium.

PROTEUS

I will forget that Julia is alive,  
Rememb'ring that my love to her is dead.  
And Valentine I'll hold an enemy,  
Aiming at Sylvia as a sweeter friend.

LUCETTA

But in what habit will you go along?

JULIA

Not like a woman, for I would prevent  
The loose encounters of lascivious men.  
Gentle Lucetta, fit me with such weeds  
As may beseem some well-reputed page.

LUCETTA

What fashion, Julia, shall I make your breeches?

JULIA

Lucetta, as thou lov'st me, let me have  
What thou think'st meet and is most mannerly.

PROTEUS

I cannot now prove constant to myself  
Without some treachery used to Valentine.  
This night he meaneth with a corded ladder  
To climb celestial Sylvia's chamber window,  
Myself in counsel his competitor.

JULIA

But tell me, friend, how will the world repute me  
For undertaking so unstaid a journey?  
I fear me it will make me scandalized.

LUCETTA

If you think so, then stay at home and go not.

JULIA Nay, that I will not.

LUCETTA

Then never dream on infamy, but go.  
If Proteus like your journey when you come,  
No matter who's displeas'd when you are gone.

PROTEUS

Now presently I'll give her father notice  
Of their disguising and pretended flight,  
Who, all enraged, will banish Valentine,  
For Thurio he intends shall wed his daughter.

LUCETTA

I fear me he will scarce be pleas'd withal.

JULIA

That is the least, Lucetta, of my fear.  
A thousand oaths, an ocean of his tears,  
And instances of infinite love  
Warrant me welcome to my Proteus.

LUCETTA

All these are servants to deceitful men.

PROTEUS

Valentine being gone, I'll quickly cross  
By some sly trick blunt Thurio's dull proceeding.

JULIA

Base men that use them to so base effect!  
But truer stars did govern Proteus' birth.

His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,  
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate,  
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart,  
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from Earth.

PROTEUS

Love, lend me wings to make my purpose swift,  
As thou hast lent me wit to plot this drift.

LUCETTA

Pray heav'n he prove so when you come to him. *He exits*

JULIA

Now, as thou lov'st me, do him not that wrong  
To bear a hard opinion of his truth.  
Only deserve my love by loving him.  
And presently go with me to my chamber  
To take a note of what I stand in need of  
To furnish me upon my longing journey.  
All that is mine I leave at thy dispose,  
My goods, my lands, my reputation.  
Only, in lieu thereof, dispatch me hence.  
Come, answer not, but to it presently.  
I am impatient of my tarriance.

*They exit.*

## **FIRST INTERMISSION**

## *ACT 3*

### **Scene 1**

*Enter Duke, Thurio, and Proteus.*

DUKE

Now tell me, Proteus, what's your will with me?

PROTEUS

My gracious lord, that which I would discover  
The law of friendship bids me to conceal,  
But when I call to mind your gracious favors  
Done to me, undeserving as I am,  
My duty pricks me on to utter that  
Which else no worldly good should draw from me.  
Know, worthy prince, Sir Valentine my friend  
This night intends to steal away your daughter;  
Myself am one made privy to the plot.  
I know you have determined to bestow her  
On Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates,  
And should she thus be stol'n away from you,  
It would be much vexation to your age.  
Thus, for my duty's sake, I rather chose  
To cross my friend in his intended drift  
Than, by concealing it, heap on your head  
A pack of sorrows which would press you down,  
Being unprevented, to your timeless grave.

DUKE

Proteus, I thank thee for thine honest care,  
Which to requite command me while I live.  
This love of theirs myself have often seen,  
Haply when they have judged me fast asleep,

And oftentimes have purposed to forbid  
Sir Valentine her company and my court.  
But fearing lest my jealous aim might err  
And so, unworthily, disgrace the man—  
A rashness that I ever yet have shunned—  
I gave him gentle looks, thereby to find  
That which thyself hast now disclosed to me.  
And that thou mayst perceive my fear of this,  
I nightly lodge her in an upper tower,  
The key whereof myself have ever kept,  
And thence she cannot be conveyed away.

PROTEUS

Know, noble lord, they have devised a way  
How he her chamber-window will ascend  
And with a corded ladder fetch her down;  
For which the youthful lover now is gone,  
And this way comes he with it presently,  
Where, if it please you, you may intercept him.  
But, good my lord, do it so cunningly  
That my discovery be not aimed at;  
For love of you, not hate unto my friend,  
Hath made me publisher of this pretense.

DUKE

Upon mine honor, he shall never know  
That I had any light from thee of this.

PROTEUS

Adieu, my lord. Sir Valentine is coming.

*Proteus exits.*

*Enter Valentine.*

DUKE

Sir Valentine, whither away so fast?

VALENTINE

Please it your Grace, there is a messenger  
That stays to bear my letters to my friends,  
And I am going to deliver them.

DUKE Be they of much import?

VALENTINE

The tenor of them doth but signify  
My health and happy being at your court.

DUKE

Nay then, no matter. Stay with me awhile;  
I am to break with thee of some affairs  
That touch me near, wherein thou must be secret.  
'Tis not unknown to thee that I have sought  
To match my friend Sir Thurio to my daughter.

VALENTINE

I know it well, my lord, and sure the match  
Were rich and honorable. Besides, the gentleman  
Is full of virtue, bounty, worth, and qualities  
Beseeming such a wife as your fair daughter.  
Cannot your Grace win her to fancy him?

DUKE

No. Trust me, she is peevish, sullen, froward,  
Proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty,  
Neither regarding that she is my child  
Nor fearing me as if I were her father.  
I now am full resolved to take a wife  
And turn her out to who will take her in.  
Then let her beauty be her wedding dower,  
For me and my possessions she esteems not.

VALENTINE

What would your Grace have me to do in this?

DUKE

There is a lady in Verona here  
Whom I affect; but she is nice, and coy,  
And nought esteems my agèd eloquence.  
Now therefore would I have thee to my tutor—  
For long agone I have forgot to court;  
How and which way I may bestow myself  
To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.

VALENTINE

Win her with gifts if she respect not words;  
Dumb jewels often in their silent kind  
More than quick words do move a woman's mind.

DUKE

But she did scorn a present that I sent her.

VALENTINE

A woman sometime scorns what best contents her.  
Send her another; never give her o'er,  
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.

DUKE

But she I mean is promised by her friends  
Unto a youthful gentleman of worth  
And kept severely from resort of men,  
That no man hath access by day to her.

VALENTINE

Why, then, I would resort to her by night.

THURIO

Ay, but the doors be locked and keys kept safe,  
That no man hath recourse to her by night.

VALENTINE

What lets but one may enter at her window?

THURIO

Her chamber is aloft, far from the ground,  
And built so shelving that one cannot climb it  
Without apparent hazard of his life.

VALENTINE

Why, then a ladder quaintly made of cords  
To cast up, with a pair of anchoring hooks,  
Would serve to scale another Hero's tower,  
So bold Leander would adventure it.

DUKE

Now, as thou art a gentleman of blood,  
Advise me where I may have such a ladder.

VALENTINE

When would you use it? Pray sir, tell me that.

DUKE

This very night; for love is like a child  
That longs for everything that he can come by.

VALENTINE

By seven o'clock I'll get you such a ladder.

DUKE

But hark thee: I will go to her alone;  
How shall I best convey the ladder thither?

VALENTINE

It will be light, my lord, that you may bear it  
Under a cloak that is of any length.

THURIO

A cloak as long as thine will serve the turn?

VALENTINE

Ay, my good lord.

DUKE Then let me see thy cloak;

I'll get me one of such another length.

VALENTINE

Why, any cloak will serve the turn, my lord.

DUKE

How shall I fashion me to wear a cloak?

I pray thee, let me feel thy cloak upon me.

*Thurio, pulling off the cloak, reveals  
a rope ladder and a paper.*

What letter is this same? What's here? (*Reads.*) To  
*Sylvia.*

*Sylvia, this night I will enfranchise thee.*

'Tis so. And here's the ladder for the purpose.

Go, base intruder, overweening rogue,

Bestow thy fawning smiles on equal mates

And think my patience, more than thy desert,

Is privilege for thy departure hence.

Thank me for this more than for all the favors

Which all too much I have bestowed on thee.

But if thou linger in my territories

Longer than swiftest expedition

Will give thee time to leave our royal court,

By heaven, my wrath shall far exceed the love

I ever bore my daughter or thyself.

Begone. I will not hear thy vain excuse,

But, as thou lov'st thy life, make speed from hence.

*Duke and Thurio exit.*

VALENTINE

And why not death, rather than living torment?

To die is to be banished from myself,

And Sylvia is myself; banished from her

Is self from self—a deadly banishment.  
What light is light if Sylvia be not seen?  
What joy is joy if Sylvia be not by—  
Unless it be to think that she is by  
And feed upon the shadow of perfection?  
Except I be by Sylvia in the night,  
There is no music in the nightingale.  
Unless I look on Sylvia in the day,  
There is no day for me to look upon.  
She is my essence, and I leave to be  
If I be not by her fair influence  
Fostered, illumined, cherished, kept alive.  
But fly I hence, I fly away from life.

*Enter Proteus*

PROTEUS

That thou art banishèd—O, that's the news—  
From hence, from Sylvia, and from me, thy friend.

VALENTINE

O, I have fed upon this woe already,  
And now excess of it will make me surfeit.  
Doth Sylvia know that I am banishèd?

PROTEUS

Ay, ay, and she hath offered to the doom  
A sea of melting pearl, which some call tears;  
Those at her father's churlish feet she tendered.  
But neither bended knees, pure hands held up,  
Sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver-shedding tears  
Could penetrate her uncompassionate sire;  
But Valentine, if he be ta'en, must die.  
Besides, her intercession chafed him so,

That to close prison he commanded her  
With many bitter threats of biding there.

VALENTINE

No more, unless the next word that thou speak'st  
Have some malignant power upon my life.  
If so, I pray thee breathe it in mine ear  
As ending anthem of my endless dolor.

PROTEUS

Cease to lament for that thou canst not help,  
And study help for that which thou lament'st.  
Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.  
Here, if thou stay, thou canst not see thy love;  
Besides, thy staying will abridge thy life.  
Hope is a lover's staff; walk hence with that  
And manage it against despairing thoughts.  
Thy letters may be here, though thou art hence,  
Which, being writ to me, shall be delivered  
Even in the fullest bosom of thy love.  
Come, I'll convey thee through the city gate  
And, ere I part with thee, confer at large  
Of all that may concern thy love affairs.  
As thou lov'st Sylvia, though not for thyself,  
Regard thy danger, and along with me.

*They exit*

## Scene 2

*Enter Duke and Thurio.*

DUKE

Sir Thurio, fear not but that she will love you  
Now Valentine is banished from her sight.

THURIO

Since his exile she hath despised me most,  
Forsworn my company and railed at me,  
That I am desperate of obtaining her.

DUKE

This weak impress of love is as a figure  
Trenchèd in ice, which with an hour's heat  
Dissolves to water and doth lose his form.  
A little time will melt her frozen thoughts,  
And worthless Valentine shall be forgot.

*Enter Proteus.*

How now, Sir Proteus? Is your countryman,  
According to our proclamation, gone?

PROTEUS Gone, my good lord.

DUKE

My daughter takes his going grievously.

PROTEUS

A little time, my lord, will kill that grief.

DUKE

So I believe, but Thurio thinks not so.  
Proteus, the good conceit I hold of thee,  
For thou hast shown some sign of good desert,  
Makes me the better to confer with thee.  
Thou know'st how willingly I would effect  
The match between Sir Thurio and my daughter?

PROTEUS I do, my lord.

DUKE

And also, I think, thou art not ignorant  
How she opposes her against my will?

PROTEUS

She did, my lord, when Valentine was here.

THURIO

Ay, and perversely she perseveres so.  
What might we do to make the girl forget  
The love of Valentine, and love Sir Thurio?

PROTEUS

The best way is to slander Valentine  
With falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent,  
Three things that women highly hold in hate.

THURIO

Ay, but she'll think that it is spoke in hate.

PROTEUS

Ay, if his enemy deliver it.  
Therefore it must with circumstance be spoken  
By one whom she esteemeth as his friend.

DUKE

Then you must undertake to slander him.

PROTEUS

And that, my lord, I shall be loath to do.  
'Tis an ill office for a gentleman,  
Especially against his very friend.

DUKE

Where your good word cannot advantage him,  
Your slander never can endamage him;  
Therefore the office is indifferent,  
Being entreated to it by your friend.

PROTEUS

You have prevailed, my lord. If I can do it  
By aught that I can speak in his dispraise,  
She shall not long continue love to him.  
But say this weed her love from Valentine,  
It follows not that she will love Sir Thurio.

THURIO

Therefore, as you unwind her love from him,  
Lest it should ravel and be good to none,  
You must provide to bottom it on me,  
Which must be done by praising me as much  
As you in worth dispraise Sir Valentine.

DUKE

And, Proteus, we dare trust you in this kind  
Because we know, on Valentine's report,  
You are already Love's firm votary  
And cannot soon revolt and change your mind.  
Upon this warrant shall you have access  
Where you with Sylvia may confer at large—  
For she is lumpish, heavy, melancholy,  
And, for your friend's sake, will be glad of you—  
Where you may temper her by your persuasion  
To hate young Valentine and love my friend.

PROTEUS

As much as I can do I will effect.—  
But you, Sir Thurio, are not sharp enough.  
You must lay lime to tangle her desires  
By wailful sonnets, whose composèd rhymes  
Should be full-fraught with serviceable vows.

DUKE

Ay, much is the force of heaven-bred poesy.

PROTEUS

Say that upon the altar of her beauty  
You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart.  
Write till your ink be dry, and with your tears  
Moist it again, and frame some feeling line  
That may discover such integrity.

After your dire-lamenting elegies,  
Visit by night your lady's chamber window  
With some sweet consort.  
This, or else nothing, will inherit her.

DUKE

This discipline shows thou hast been in love.

THURIO, *to Proteus*

And thy advice this night I'll put in practice.  
I have a sonnet that will serve the turn  
To give the onset to thy good advice.

DUKE About it, gentlemen.

PROTEUS

We'll wait upon your Grace till after supper  
And afterward determine our proceedings.

DUKE

Even now about it! I will pardon you.

*Duke and Thurio exit.*

**ACT 4****Scene 2**

*Enter Proteus.*

PROTEUS

Already have I been false to Valentine,  
And now I must be as unjust to Thurio.  
Under the color of commending him,  
I have access my own love to prefer.  
But Sylvia is too rare, too true, too holy  
To be corrupted with my worthless gifts.  
When I protest true loyalty to her,  
She twits me with my falsehood to my friend;  
When to her beauty I commend my vows,  
She bids me think how I have been forsworn  
In breaking faith with Julia, whom I loved;  
And notwithstanding all her sudden quips,  
The least whereof would quell a lover's hope.  
Yet, spaniel-like, the more she spurns my love,  
The more it grows and fawneth on her still.  
But here comes Thurio. Now must we to her  
window  
And give some evening music to her ear.

*Enter Thurio.*

THURIO

How now, Sir Proteus, are you crept before us?

PROTEUS

Ay, gentle Thurio, for you know that love  
Will creep in service where it cannot go.

THURIO

Ay, but I hope, sir, that you love not here.

PROTEUS

Sir, but I do, or else I would be hence.

THURIO

Who, Sylvia?

PROTEUS Ay, Sylvia, for your sake.

THURIO

I thank you for your own.—Now, gentleman,

Let's tune, and to it lustily awhile.

*Enter Host of the inn, and Julia, disguised as a page, Sebastian. They stand at a distance and talk.*

HOST Now, my young guest, methinks you're allycholly.

I pray you, why is it?

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Marry, mine host, because I

cannot be merry.

HOST Come, we'll have you merry. I'll bring you where

you shall hear poetry and see the gentleman that you

asked for.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* But shall I hear him speak?

HOST Ay, that you shall.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* That will be music.

HOST Hark, hark.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Is he among these?

HOST Ay. But peace; let's hear 'em.

*Song/SLAM POETRY.*

PROTEUS *Who is Sylvia? What is she,*

*That all our swains commend her?*

*Holy, fair, and wise is she;*

*The heaven such grace did lend her  
That she might admirèd be.*

*Is she kind as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness.  
Love doth to her eyes repair  
To help him of his blindness;  
And, being helped, inhabits there.*

*Then to Sylvia let us sing,  
That Sylvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling.  
To her let us garlands bring.*

HOST How now? Are you sadder than you were before?

How do you, man? The poetry likes you not.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* You mistake. The poet likes me  
not.

HOST Why, my pretty youth?

JULIA, *as Sebastian* He plays false, father.

HOST I perceive you delight not in poetry.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Not a whit when it jars so.

HOST Hark, what fine change is in the meter!

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Ay; that change is the spite.

HOST You would have them always play but one  
thing?

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

I would always have one play but one thing.

But, host, doth this Sir Proteus, that we talk on,

Often resort unto this gentlewoman?

HOST I tell you what this man told me: he loved  
her out of all nick.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Peace. Stand aside. The company  
parts. *Host and Julia move away.*

PROTEUS

Sir Thurio, fear not you. I will so plead  
That you shall say my cunning drift excels.

THURIO

Where meet we?

PROTEUS At Saint Gregory's well.

THURIO Farewell.

*Thurio exits.*  
*Enter Sylvia, above.*

PROTEUS

Madam, good even to your Ladyship.

SYLVIA

Who is that that spake?

PROTEUS

One, lady, if you knew his pure heart's truth,  
You would quickly learn to know him by his voice.

SYLVIA Sir Proteus, as I take it.

PROTEUS

Sir Proteus, gentle lady, and your servant.

SYLVIA

What's your will?

PROTEUS That I may compass yours.

SYLVIA

You have your wish: my will is even this,  
That presently you hie you home to bed.  
Thou subtle, perjured, false, disloyal man,  
Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,

To be seduced by thy flattery,  
That hast deceived so many with thy vows?  
Return, return, and make thy love amends.  
For me, by this pale queen of night I swear,  
I am so far from granting thy request  
That I despise thee for thy wrongful suit  
And by and by intend to chide myself  
Even for this time I spend in talking to thee.

PROTEUS

I grant, sweet love, that I did love a lady,  
But she is dead.

JULIA, *aside* 'Twere false if I should speak it,  
For I am sure she is not buried.

SYLVIA

Say that she be; yet Valentine thy friend  
Survives, to whom, thyself art witness,  
I am betrothed. And art thou not ashamed  
To wrong him with thy importunacy?

PROTEUS

I likewise hear that Valentine is dead.

SYLVIA

And so suppose am I, for in his grave,  
Assure thyself, my love is buried.

PROTEUS

Sweet lady, let me rake it from the earth.

SYLVIA

Go to thy lady's grave and call hers thence,  
Or, at the least, in hers sepulcher thine.

JULIA, *aside* He heard not that.

PROTEUS

Madam, if your heart be so obdurate,

Vouchsafe me yet your picture for my love,  
The picture that is hanging in your chamber;  
To that I'll speak, to that I'll sigh and weep.

JULIA, *aside*

If 'twere a substance you would sure deceive it  
And make it but a shadow, as I am.

SYLVIA

I am very loath to be your idol, sir;  
But since your falsehood shall become you well  
To worship shadows and adore false shapes,  
Send to me in the morning, and I'll send it.

And so, good rest. *Sylvia exits.*

PROTEUS As wretches have o'ernight

That wait for execution in the morn. *Proteus exits.*

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Host, will you go?

HOST By my halidom, I was fast asleep.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Pray you, where lies Sir Proteus?

HOST Marry, at my house. Trust me, I think 'tis almost  
day.

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

Not so; but it hath been the longest night  
That e'er I watched, and the most heaviest.

*Host exits.*

## **SECOND INTERMISSION**

**Scene 3**

*Enter Eglamour (puts on glasses).*

EGLAMOUR

This is the hour that Madam Sylvia  
Entreated me to call and know her mind;  
There's some great matter she'd employ me in.  
Madam, madam!

*Enter Sylvia, above.*

SYLVIA Who calls?

EGLAMOUR Your servant, and your friend,  
One that attends your Ladyship's command.

SYLVIA

Sir Eglamour, a thousand times good morrow.

EGLAMOUR

As many, worthy lady, to yourself.  
According to your Ladyship's impose,  
I am thus early come to know what service  
It is your pleasure to command me in.

SYLVIA

O Eglamour, thou art a gentleman—  
Think not I flatter, for I swear I do not—  
Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplished.  
Thou art not ignorant what dear good will  
I bear unto the banished Valentine,  
Nor how my father would enforce me marry  
Vain Thurio, whom my very soul abhorred.  
Thyself hast loved, and I have heard thee say  
No grief did ever come so near thy heart  
As when thy lady and thy true love died,  
Upon whose grave thou vow'dst pure chastity.

Sir Eglamour, I would to Valentine,  
To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode;  
And for the ways are dangerous to pass,  
I do desire thy worthy company,  
Upon whose faith and honor I repose.  
Urge not my father's anger, Eglamour,  
But think upon my grief, a lady's grief,  
And on the justice of my flying hence  
To keep me from a most unholy match,  
Which heaven and fortune still rewards with plagues.  
I do desire thee, even from a heart  
As full of sorrows as the sea of sands,  
To bear me company and go with me;  
If not, to hide what I have said to thee,  
That I may venture to depart alone.

EGLAMOUR

Madam, I pity much your grievances,  
Which, since I know they virtuously are placed,  
I give consent to go along with you,  
Recking as little what betideth me  
As much I wish all good befortune you.  
When will you go?

SYLVIA This evening coming.

EGLAMOUR

Where shall I meet you?

SYLVIA At Friar Patrick's cell,  
Where I intend holy confession.

EGLAMOUR

I will not fail your Ladyship. Good morrow, gentle  
lady.

SYLVIA

Good morrow, kind Sir Eglamour.

*They exit.*

*Enter Proteus.*

PROTEUS

Sebastian is thy name? I like thee well

And will employ thee in some service presently.

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

In what you please. I'll do what I can.

PROTEUS

I hope thou wilt

Sebastian, I have entertained thee,

Partly that I have need of such a youth

That can with some discretion do my business—

For 'tis no trusting to foolish louts—

But chiefly for thy face and thy behavior,

Which, if my augury deceive me not,

Witness good bringing-up, fortune, and truth.

Therefore, know thou, for this I entertain thee.

Go presently, and take this ring with thee;

Deliver it to Madam Sylvia.

She loved me well delivered it to me.

*He gives her a ring.*

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

It seems you loved not her, to leave her token.

She is dead belike?

PROTEUS Not so; I think she lives.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Alas!

PROTEUS Why dost thou cry "Alas"?

JULIA, *as Sebastian* I cannot choose but pity her.

PROTEUS Wherefore shouldst thou pity her?

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

Because methinks that she loved you as well  
As you do love your lady Sylvia.  
She dreams on him that has forgot her love;  
You dote on her that cares not for your love.  
'Tis pity love should be so contrary,  
And thinking on it makes me cry "Alas."

PROTEUS

Well, give her that ring and therewithal  
This letter. *He gives her a paper.* That's her  
chamber. Tell my lady  
I claim the promise for her heavenly picture.  
Your message done, hie home unto my chamber,  
Where thou shalt find me sad and solitary.

*Proteus exits.*

JULIA

How many women would do such a message?  
Alas, poor Proteus, thou hast entertained  
A fox to be the shepherd of thy lambs.  
Alas, poor fool, why do I pity him  
That with his very heart despiseth me?  
Because he loves her, he despiseth me;  
Because I love him, I must pity him?  
This ring I gave him when he parted from me,  
To bind him to remember my good will;  
And now am I, unhappy messenger,  
To plead for that which I would not obtain,  
To carry that which I would have refused,  
To praise his faith, which I would have dispraised.  
I am my lover's true confirmed love,  
But cannot be true servant to my lover

Unless I prove false traitor to myself.

*Enter Sylvia.*

*As Sebastian.* Gentlewoman, good day. I pray you be  
my mean

To bring me where to speak with Madam Sylvia.

SYLVIA

What would you with her, if that I be she?

*JULIA, as Sebastian*

If you be she, I do entreat your patience

To hear me speak the message I am sent on.

SYLVIA From whom?

*JULIA, as Sebastian* From my employer, Sir Proteus,  
madam.

SYLVIA O, he sends you for a picture?

*JULIA, as Sebastian* Ay, madam.

SYLVIA

Go, give your master this. Tell him from me,  
One Julia, that his changing thoughts forget,  
Would better fit his chamber than this shadow.

*JULIA, as Sebastian* Madam, please you peruse this  
letter. *She gives Sylvia a paper.*

SYLVIA There, hold.

I will not look upon your master's lines;  
I know they are stuffed with protestations  
And full of new-found oaths, which he will break  
As easily as I do tear his paper.

*She tears the second paper.*

*JULIA, as Sebastian*

Madam, he sends your Ladyship this ring.

*She offers Sylvia a ring.*

SYLVIA

The more shame for him, that he sends it me;  
For I have heard him say a thousand times  
His Julia gave it him at his departure.  
Though his false finger have profaned the ring,  
Mine shall not do his Julia so much wrong.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* She thanks you.

SYLVIA What sayst thou?

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

I thank you, madam, that you tender her;  
Poor, sweet maid, my employer wrongs her much.

SYLVIA

Dost thou know her?

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

Almost as well as I do know myself.  
To think upon her woes, I do protest  
That I have wept a hundred several times.

SYLVIA

Belike she thinks that Proteus hath forsook her?

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

I think she doth, and that's her cause of sorrow.

SYLVIA Is she not beautiful?

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

She hath been prettier, miss, than she is;  
When she did think my employer loved her well,  
She, in my judgment, was as lovely as you.

SYLVIA How tall was she?

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

About my stature; for at Pentecost,  
When all our pageants of delight were played,  
Our youth got me to play the woman's part,

And I was trimmed in Madam Julia's gown,  
As if the garment had been made for me;  
Therefore I know she is about my height.  
And at that time I made her weep agood,  
For I did play a lamentable part;  
Madam, 'twas Ariadne, passioning  
For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight,  
Which I so lively acted with my tears  
That my poor mistress, movèd therewithal,  
Wept bitterly; and would I might be dead  
If I in thought felt not her very sorrow.

SYLVIA

She is beholding to thee, gentle youth.  
Alas, poor lady, desolate and left!  
I weep myself to think upon thy words.  
Here, youth, there is my purse.

*She gives Julia a purse. Their hands meet and spark.*

I give thee this  
For thy sweet mistress' sake, because thou lov'st her.  
Farewell.

JULIA, *as Sebastian*

And she shall thank you for 't if e'er you know her,  
Virtuous gentlewoman, mild and beautiful.

*They share a moment of recognition and attraction.*

*Julia transforms into Sir Eglamour.*

## ***ACT 5***

### **Scene 1**

*Enter Eglamour.*

EGLAMOUR

Lady, a happy evening.

SYLVIA

Amen, amen. Go on, good Eglamour,

Out at the postern by the abbey wall.

I fear I am attended by some spies.

EGLAMOUR

Fear not. The forest is not three leagues off;

If we recover that, we are sure enough.

*They exit.*

### **Scene 2**

*Enter Thurio, Proteus, and Julia, disguised as Sebastian.*

THURIO

Sir Proteus, what says Sylvia to my suit?

PROTEUS

O sir, I find her milder than she was,

And yet she takes exceptions at your person.

THURIO What? That my leg is too long?

PROTEUS No, that it is too little.

THURIO

I'll wear a boot to make it somewhat rounder.

JULIA, *aside*

But love will not be spurred to what it loathes.

THURIO What says she to my face?

PROTEUS She says it is a fair one.

THURIO How likes she my discourse?

PROTEUS Ill, when you talk of war.

THURIO

But well when I discourse of love and peace.

JULIA, *aside*

But better, indeed, when you hold your peace.

THURIO What says she to my valor?

PROTEUS O, sir, she makes no doubt of that.

JULIA, *aside*

She needs not when she knows it cowardice.

THURIO What says she to my birth?

PROTEUS That you are well derived.

JULIA, *aside* True, from a gentleman to a fool.

THURIO Considers she my possessions?

PROTEUS O, ay, and pities them.

THURIO Wherefore?

JULIA, *aside* That such an ass should own them.

PROTEUS

That they are out by lease.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Here comes the Duke.

*Enter Duke.*

DUKE

How now, Sir Proteus?—How now, Thurio?

Which of you saw Eglamour of late?

THURIO

Not I.

PROTEUS Nor I.

DUKE Saw you my daughter?

PROTEUS Neither.

DUKE

Why, then, she's fled unto that peasant, Valentine,  
And Eglamour is in her company.

Therefore I pray you stand not to discourse,

But mount you presently and meet with me

Upon the rising of the mountain foot

That leads toward Mantua, whither they are fled.

Dispatch, sweet gentlemen, and follow me.

*He exits.*

THURIO

Why, this it is to be a peevish girl

That flies her fortune when it follows her.

I'll after, more to be revenged on Eglamour

Than for the love of reckless Sylvia.

*He exits.*

PROTEUS

And I will follow, more for Sylvia's love

Than hate of Eglamour that goes with her.

*He exits.*

JULIA

And I will follow, more to cross that love

Than hate for Sylvia, that is gone for love.

*She exits.*

#### **Scene 4**

*Enter Valentine.*

VALENTINE

How use doth breed a habit in a man!

This shadowy forest, unfrequented woods,

I better brook than flourishing peopled towns;  
Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,  
And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
Tune my distresses and record my woes.  
O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,  
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless  
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall  
And leave no memory of what it was.  
Repair me with thy presence, Sylvia;  
Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain.

*Shouting and sounds of fighting.*

What hallowing and what stir is this today?  
Withdraw thee, Valentine. Who's this comes here?

*He steps aside.*

*Enter Proteus, Sylvia, and Julia, disguised as  
Sebastian.*

PROTEUS

Madam, this service I have done for you—  
Though you respect not aught your servant doth—  
To hazard life, and rescue you from him  
That would have forced your honor and your love.  
Vouchsafe me for my meed but one kind look;  
A smaller boon than this I cannot beg,  
And less than this I am sure you cannot give.

VALENTINE, *aside*

How like a dream is this I see and hear!  
Love, lend me patience to forbear awhile.

SYLVIA

O miserable, unhappy that I am!

PROTEUS

Unhappy were you, madam, ere I came,  
But by my coming, I have made you happy.

SYLVIA

By thy approach thou mak'st me most unhappy.

JULIA, *aside*

And me, when he approacheth to your presence.

SYLVIA

Had I been seizèd by a hungry lion,  
I would have been a breakfast to the beast  
Rather than have false Proteus rescue me.  
O heaven, be judge how I love Valentine,  
Whose life's as tender to me as my soul;  
And full as much, for more there cannot be,  
I do detest false perjured Proteus.  
Therefore begone; solicit me no more.

PROTEUS

What dangerous action, stood it next to death,  
Would I not undergo for one calm look!  
O, 'tis the curse in love, and still approved,  
When women cannot love where they're beloved.

SYLVIA

When Proteus cannot love where he's beloved.  
Read over Julia's heart, thy first best love,  
For whose dear sake thou didst then rend thy faith  
Into a thousand oaths; and all those oaths  
Descended into perjury to love me.  
Thou counterfeit to thy true friend!

PROTEUS In love

Who respects friend?

SYLVIA All men but Proteus.

PROTEUS

Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words  
Can no way change you to a milder form,  
I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end,  
And love you 'gainst the nature of love—force you.

*All stop, appalled at what was spoke. Including Proteus.*

SYLVIA

O, heaven!

JULIA

O, heaven!

VALENTINE

O, heaven!

PROTEUS

O, heaven!

VALENTINE, *advancing*

Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch,  
Thou friend of an ill fashion.

PROTEUS Valentine!

VALENTINE

Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,  
For such is a friend now. Treacherous man,  
Thou hast beguiled my hopes; nought but mine eye  
Could have persuaded me. Now I dare not say  
I have one friend alive; thou wouldst disprove me.  
Who should be trusted when one's right hand  
Is perjured to the bosom? Proteus,  
I am sorry I must never trust thee more,  
But count the world a stranger for thy sake.  
The private wound is deepest. O, time most

accursed,

'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst!

PROTEUS My shame and guilt confounds me.

Forgive me, Valentine. If hearty sorrow

Be a sufficient ransom for offense,

I tender 't here. I do as truly suffer

As e'er I did commit.

JULIA, *as Sebastian* O, good sir, Proteus charged

me to deliver a ring to Madam Sylvia, which out of

my neglect was never done.

PROTEUS Where is that ring, boy?

JULIA, *as Sebastian* Here 'tis; this is it.

*She rises, and hands him a ring.*

PROTEUS How, let me see.

Why, this is the ring I gave to Julia.

But how cam'st thou by this ring? At my depart

I gave this unto Julia.

JULIA

And Julia herself did give it me,

And Julia herself hath brought it hither.

*She reveals herself.*

PROTEUS How? Julia!

JULIA

Behold her that gave aim to all thy oaths

And entertained 'em deeply in her heart.

How oft hast thou with perjury cleft the root!

O, Proteus, let this habit make thee blush.

It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,

Women to change their shapes than men their minds.

*Enter Thurio, and Duke.*

DUKE

Sir Valentine?

THURIO Yonder is Sylvia, and Sylvia's mine.

VALENTINE

Thurio, give back, or else embrace thy death;

Come not within the measure of my wrath.

Do not name Sylvia thine; if once again,

Verona shall not hold thee. Here she stands;

Take but possession of her with a touch—

I dare thee but to breathe upon my love!

THURIO

Sir Valentine, I care not for her, I.

I hold him but a fool that will endanger

His body for a girl that loves him not.

I claim her not, and therefore she is thine.

DUKE

The more degenerate and base art thou

To make such means for her as thou hast done,

And leave her on such slight conditions.—

Now, by the honor of my ancestry,

I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine,

And think thee worthy of an empress' love.

Know, then, I here forget all former griefs,

Cancel all grudge, repeal thee home again,

Plead a new state in thy unrivaled merit,

To which I thus subscribe: Sir Valentine,

Thou art a gentleman, and well derived;

Take thou thy Sylvia, for thou hast deserved her.

VALENTINE

I thank your Grace, the gift hath made me happy.

*Horrified, Silvia and Julia back into each other and touch hands. Time stops. They face each other, seeing every confidante and kind friend they have known. They decide to exit together. When they are gone, time restarts. The men realize the women are gone, and they've no one to blame but themselves. They are left onstage, with only each other.*

**END OF PLAY**