

## **Synopsis, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona***

Valentine and Proteus are best friends. Valentine wants to see the world; Proteus wants to romance his sweetheart, Julia. They enjoy debating the pros and cons of love. As they part, Speed, Valentine's servant, follows after, late for his trip abroad because he was delivering letters for Proteus. We next meet Julia, Proteus' beloved. She is trying to decide whom she should favor; her lady in waiting Lucetta has some very pointed ideas about it!

After Valentine leaves for Milan, Proteus' father Antonio is convinced to let Proteus travel also (much to Proteus' dismay.) In Milan, amazingly, Valentine has fallen in love with a girl, and Speed teases him incessantly. His new love, Sylvia, shows up, and asks Valentine for the letter she asked him to write for her "other" boyfriend. He misses the point completely (she wanted **him** to write a love letter to **her** without seeming too forward) and Speed teases him incessantly.

Julia and Proteus say goodbye, and exchange rings as a pledge of their love. Launce, Proteus' servant, tells us about saying goodbye to his family. He does get to take his dog, Crab, with him, however.

Meanwhile, in Milan, Valentine is competing with Sir Thurio for Sylvia's attention. Her father, the Duke of Milan, prefers Thurio for his daughter's hand in marriage. Proteus shows up and meets Sylvia. Between one breath and the next, he switches his affections from Julia to Sylvia, and becomes a rival to his best friend, Valentine. Valentine, not realizing what has happened, shares his secret elopement plans; he and Sylvia have decided to do a "Romeo and Juliet", by getting married in secret and running away to be together. Speed and Launce meet up and discuss the affections and affectations of their respective masters, and decide that a Tavern is the perfect antidote to the vagaries of love.

Proteus debates the wisdom of abandoning his best friend and his first love for the uncertain future of loving Sylvia but decides it is better to risk all in this second love, rather than remaining where he is sure of a return of love. If he does not follow Love, he runs the risk of losing himself, he reasons. Julia decides to follow Proteus to Milan and convinces Lucetta to help in disguising herself as a boy page. Meanwhile, the Duke has mewed up his daughter Sylvia (on a Balcony, no less!) because she favors Valentine over Thurio. Proteus begins his secret plan of discrediting Valentine and tells the Duke about the secret elopement plan. The Duke confronts Valentine and banishes him from Milan. Proteus enters after the Duke's harsh sentence and convinces Valentine to escape to the forest. If he can't see Sylvia at least he can get her letters.

Once Valentine is out of the way, the Duke and Proteus coach Thurio on how to woo Sylvia, now confined nightly to her upstairs room. Proteus describes how he would woo a reluctant girl, and encourages Thurio to hire musicians to sing at Sylvia's balcony later that night. Meanwhile, in the forest, several outlaws capture Valentine and Speed. The outlaws are more like Robin Hood than Bonnie and Clyde and Valentine is convinced to be their leader, as they really need a boss telling them what to do!

Proteus secretly woos Sylvia by taking advantage of Thurio, but Sylvia remains devoted to Valentine. Proteus vows to continue wooing Sylvia and hires the disguised-as-a-page Julia. Sylvia has asked the knight Sir Eglamore to escort her to the forest, where she can hook up with Valentine and escape her father's suitor, Thurio. Launce has some issues with his dog, Crab. Proteus got a cute little dog for Sylvia, and Launce substituted Crab for the cutie-pie dog. Crab has very, very, very bad manners.

Julia, in her boy page guise, meets Sylvia. Sylvia is very sympathetic to the plight of the abandoned Julia, and still refuses to be courted by Proteus. Eglamore escorts Sylvia into the forest to find Valentine, but things don't go quite as planned. The Duke, Proteus and Thurio all follow the escaping Sylvia, and everyone meets up with the outlaws, in the forest. Proteus

rescues Sylvia from the outlaws, Valentine rescues Sylvia from Proteus; repentance rescues Proteus from Valentine, true love and fidelity rescue Valentine from himself, and all is put right in the end. After all, this is a comedy.