

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

2.5

Enter Speed, and Lance with his dog Crab

SPEED Lance, by mine honesty, welcome to Milan.

LANCE Forswear not thyself, sweet youth, for I am not welcome. I reckon this always, that a man is never undone till he be hanged, nor never welcome to a place till some certain shot be paid and the hostess say 5
`Welcome'.

SPEED Come on, you madcap. I'll to the alehouse with you presently, where, for one shot of five pence, thou shalt have five thousand welcomes. But sirrah, how did thy master part with Madam Julia? 10

LANCE Marry, after they closed in earnest they parted very fairly in jest.

SPEED But shall she marry him?

LANCE No.

SPEED How then, shall he marry her? 15

LANCE No, neither.

SPEED What, are they broken?

LANCE No, they are both as whole as a fish.

SPEED Why then, how stands the matter with them?

LANCE Marry, thus: when it stands well with him it 20
stands well with her.

SPEED What an ass art thou! I understand thee not.

LANCE What a block art thou, that thou canst not! My staff understands me.

SPEED What thou sayst? 25

LANCE Ay, and what I do too. Look thee, I'll but lean, and my staff under-stands me.

SPEED It stands under thee indeed.

LANCE Why, stand-under and under-stand is all one.

SPEED But tell me true, will't be a match? 30

LANCE Ask my dog. If he say `Ay', it will. If he say `No', it will. If he shake his tail and say nothing, it will.

SPEED The conclusion is, then, that it will.

LANCE Thou shalt never get such a secret from me but by a parable. 35

SPEED 'Tis well that I get it so. But Lance, how sayst thou
that my master is become a notable lover?

LANCE I never knew him otherwise.

SPEED Than how?

LANCE A notable lubber, as thou reportest him to be. 40

SPEED Why, thou whoreson ass, thou mistak'st me.

LANCE Why, fool, I meant not thee, I meant thy master.

SPEED I tell thee my master is become a hot lover.

LANCE Why, I tell thee I care not, though he burn himself
in love. If thou wilt, go with me to the alehouse. If not, 45
thou art an Hebrew, a Jew, and not worth the name
of a Christian.

SPEED Why?

LANCE Because thou hast not so much charity in thee as
to go to the ale with a Christian. Wilt thou go? 50

SPEED At thy service.

Exeunt