

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

2.6

Enter Proteus

PROTEUS

To leave my Julia shall I be forsworn;
To love fair Silvia shall I be forsworn;
To wrong my friend I shall be much forsworn.
And e'en that power which gave me first my oath
Provokes me to this three-fold perjury. 5
Love bade me swear, and love bids me forswear.
O sweet-suggesting love, if thou hast sinned
Teach me, thy tempted subject, to excuse it.
At first I did adore a twinkling star,
But now I worship a celestial sun. 10
Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken,
And he wants wit that wants resolve. Ad will
To learn his wit t'exchange the bad for better.
Fie, fie, unreverent tongue, to call her bad
Whose sovereignty so oft thou hast preferred 15
With twenty thousand soul-confirming oaths.
I cannot leave to love, and yet I do.
But there I leave to love where I should love.
Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose.
If I keep them I needs must lose myself. 20
If I lose them, thus find I by their loss
For Valentine, myself, for Julia, Silvia.
I to myself am dearer than a friend,
For love is still most precious in itself,
And Silvia witness heaven that made her fair 25
Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiop.
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 Silvia as a sweeter friend. 30
I cannot now prove constant to myself
Without some treachery used to Valentine.
This night he meaneth with a corded ladder
To climb celestial Silvia's chamber-window,

Myself in counsel his competitor. 35

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.

But Valentine being gone, I'll quickly cross 40
By some sly trick blunt Thurio's dull proceeding.
Love, lend me wings to make my purpose swift,
As thou hast lent me wit to plot this drift.

Exit