

Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 1
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

SCENE I. Milan. The DUKE's palace.

Enter VALENTINE and SPEED

SPEED

Sir, your glove.

VALENTINE

Not mine; my gloves are on.

SPEED

Why, then, this may be yours, for this is but one.

VALENTINE

Ha! let me see: ay, give it me, it's mine:
Sweet ornament that decks a thing divine!
Ah, Silvia, Silvia!

SPEED

Madam Silvia! Madam Silvia!

VALENTINE

How now, sirrah?

SPEED

She is not within hearing, sir.

VALENTINE

Why, sir, who bade you call her?

SPEED

Your worship, sir; or else I mistook.

VALENTINE

Well, you'll still be too forward.

SPEED

And yet I was last chidden for being too slow.

VALENTINE

Go to, sir: tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?

SPEED

She that your worship loves?

VALENTINE

Why, how know you that I am in love?

SPEED

Marry, by these special marks: first, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms, like a malecontent; to relish a love-song, like a robin-redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; to sigh, like a school-boy that had lost his A B C; to weep, like a young wench that had buried her grandam; to fast, like one that takes diet; to watch like one that fears robbing; to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money: and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.

VALENTINE

Are all these things perceived in me?

SPEED

They are all perceived without ye.

VALENTINE

Without me? they cannot.

SPEED

Without you? nay, that's certain, for, without you were so simple, none else would: but you are so without these follies, that these follies are within you and shine through you like the water in an urinal, that not an eye that sees you but is a physician to comment on your malady.

VALENTINE

But tell me, dost thou know my lady Silvia?

SPEED

She that you gaze on so as she sits at supper?

VALENTINE

Hast thou observed that? even she, I mean.

SPEED

Why, sir, I know her not.

VALENTINE

Dost thou know her by my gazing on her, and yet knowest her not?

SPEED

Is she not hard-favoured, sir?

VALENTINE

Not so fair, boy, as well-favoured.

SPEED

Sir, I know that well enough.

VALENTINE

What dost thou know?

SPEED

That she is not so fair as, of you, well-favoured.

VALENTINE

I mean that her beauty is exquisite, but her favour infinite.

SPEED

That's because the one is painted and the other out of all count.

VALENTINE

How painted? and how out of count?

SPEED

Marry, sir, so painted, to make her fair, that no man counts of her beauty.

VALENTINE

How esteemest thou me? I account of her beauty.

SPEED

You never saw her since she was deformed.

VALENTINE

How long hath she been deformed?

SPEED

Ever since you loved her.

VALENTINE

I have loved her ever since I saw her; and still I see her beautiful.

SPEED

If you love her, you cannot see her.

VALENTINE

Why?

SPEED

Because Love is blind. O, that you had mine eyes; or your own eyes had the lights they were wont to have when you chid at Sir Proteus for going ungartered!

VALENTINE

What should I see then?

SPEED

Your own present folly and her passing deformity: for he, being in love, could not see to garter his hose, and you, being in love, cannot see to put on your hose.

VALENTINE

Belike, boy, then, you are in love; for last morning you could not see to wipe my shoes.

SPEED

True, sir; I was in love with my bed: I thank you, you swung me for my love, which makes me the bolder to chide you for yours.

VALENTINE

In conclusion, I stand affected to her.

SPEED

I would you were set, so your affection would cease.

VALENTINE

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

SPEED

And have you?

VALENTINE

I have.

SPEED

Are they not lamely writ?

VALENTINE

No, boy, but as well as I can do them. Peace! here she comes.

SPEED

[Aside] O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet! Now will he interpret to her.

Enter SILVIA

VALENTINE

Madam and mistress, a thousand good-morrows.

SPEED

[Aside] O, give ye good even! here's a million of manners.

SILVIA

Sir Valentine and servant, to you two thousand.

SPEED

[Aside] He should give her interest and she gives it him.

VALENTINE

As you enjoin'd 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.

SILVIA

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.

SILVIA

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--

SILVIA

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; and yet I thank you,
Meaning henceforth to trouble you no more.

SPEED

[Aside] And yet you will; and yet another 'yet.'

VALENTINE

What means your ladyship? do you not like it?

SILVIA

Yes, yes; the lines are very quaintly writ;

But since unwillingly, take them again.
Nay, take them.

VALENTINE

Madam, they are for you.

SILVIA

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

Please you, I'll write your ladyship another.

SILVIA

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?

SILVIA

Why, if it please you, take it for your labour:
And so, good morrow, servant.

Exit

SPEED

O jest unseen, inscrutable, invisible,
As a nose on a man's face, or a weathercock on a steeple!
My master sues to her, and she hath
taught her suitor,
He being her pupil, to become her tutor.
O excellent device! was there ever heard a better,
That my master, being scribe, to himself should write
the letter?

VALENTINE

How now, sir? what are you reasoning with yourself?

SPEED

Nay, I was rhyming: 'tis you that have the reason.

VALENTINE

To do what?

SPEED

To be a spokesman for Madam Silvia.

VALENTINE

To whom?

SPEED

To yourself: why, she woos you by a figure.

VALENTINE

What figure?

SPEED

By a letter, I should say.

VALENTINE

Why, she hath not writ to me?

SPEED

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

VALENTINE

No, believe me.

SPEED

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

VALENTINE

She gave me none, except an angry word.

SPEED

Why, she hath given you a letter.

VALENTINE

That's the letter I writ to her friend.

SPEED

And that letter hath she delivered, and there an end.

VALENTINE

I would it were no worse.

SPEED

I'll warrant you, 'tis as well:
For often have you 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.
Why muse you, sir? 'tis dinner-time.

VALENTINE

I have dined.

SPEED

Ay, but hearken, sir; though the chameleon Love can
feed on the air, I am one that am nourished by my
victuals, and would fain have meat. O, be not like
your mistress; be moved, be moved.

Exeunt

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 1
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)