



Julia.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, ACT 4, SC. 4.

The fair Julia, as Verona was the land, but she mistress of Proteus. This gallant had a secret lover named Valentine—a gay young fellow, who had been at school with his victim, and who persuaded that

How long I have been your lover.

had just got out on a journey to Milan, where he was to be captain in the service of the emperor. A short time after his departure, Antonio, the father of Proteus, determined that his son should join his friend in his honorable position at court, and forthwith notified that young gentleman to prepare for the journey. Proteus had but one sweet drop in his bitter cup of trial: his cruel mistress, full of remorse and sorrow, refused her love for him. At parting they exchanged rings, after the fashion of true lovers; and Proteus took a last agonizing farewell of his Julia in the following high-flown speech:

Here is my hand for my true constancy;
And when that hour o'ersteps you in the day
When I shall see you, Julia, for thy sake,
The next morning have mine hand
To be the first to kiss thy cheek.



JULIA.

THE fair Julia of Verona was the beloved but coy mistress of Proteus. This gallant had a bosom friend, named Valentine—a gay young fellow, who laughed at Love and its victims, and who, persuaded that

Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits,

had just set out on a journey to Milan, where he was to engage in the service of the emperor. A short time after his departure, Antonio, the father of Proteus, determined that his son should join his friend in his honorable position at court, and forthwith notified that young gentleman to prepare for the journey. Proteus had but one sweet drop in his bitter cup of trial: his cruel mistress, full of remorse and sorrow, confessed her love for him. At parting they exchanged rings, after the fashion of true lovers; and Proteus took a last agonizing farewell of his Julia in the following high-flown speech:

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!

—while poor Julia was too much overcome to utter a single word.

Arrived at Milan, Proteus found Valentine violently enamoured of Silvia, the beautiful daughter of the Duke of Milan, to whom Proteus had no sooner been presented by his friend than he forgot the lady of his vows, and set his wits to work to win this new love at all hazards.

The Duke of Milan desired to marry his daughter to a nobleman of his court, Thurio by name, who was “by her very soul abhorred;” for she reciprocated Valentine’s passion, and longed for nothing more than to reward it by the gift of her hand in marriage. Feeling sure that the duke would never consent to this, they had made all their arrangements to elope, but were discovered through the treachery of Proteus, who, maddened at the thought of losing Silvia forever, had betrayed Valentine to her father.

Valentine was at once banished the kingdom, and Thurio, re-animating, urged anew his suit, through Proteus, to the hapless Silvia; Proteus played a treacherous game with Thurio, also—pretending to advance his interests with the lady, while he spoke only for his own.

Meanwhile, Julia, grown impatient to behold her plighted lover, conceived the romantic idea of following him to Milan; and with no attendant or protection, save her disguise as a “well-reputed page,” she accomplished her “sentimental journey” to that city. Having reached there safely, the host of the inn where she lodged, in pity for the loneliness of his young guest, led her at night to where she should hear music—but alas! what should the music be, but a serenade given by her faithless Proteus to the Lady Silvia, to whom he was pressing his suit as she leaned from her window. . . Apparently but little daunted, Julia contrived

to enter her lover’s service as a page; and like Viola—and yet *not* like Viola—she became the martyred Mercury between her own beloved and the lady of his new passion. But little success attended this thankless office: Silvia scorned the thrice-perjured Proteus—for she knew of his faithlessness to a lady in Verona; and finally, to rid herself of his abhorred proposals, and her father’s importunities in behalf of Thurio, she formed the hazardous project of escaping to join Valentine, who, she had heard, had taken refuge in Mantua.

But Valentine, on his way to Mantua, had been waylaid in a forest not far from Milan, and by his gallant bearing had so pleased the bandits that they made him their captain. Silvia, with a gentleman who had volunteered to accompany her, on entering the forest was seized by one of this band of ruffians, but rescued by Proteus, who, followed by his page, had pursued her in hot haste. Proteus took advantage of her lonely condition—her companion having been separated from her in the *melée*—to urge his suit in no very gentle terms; but Valentine arrived just in time to thwart his ungracious purpose. Finally, the duke and Thurio, likewise in pursuit of Silvia, were captured by the robbers, and brought in triumph before their captain; whereupon full explanations were afforded to all concerned: Thurio relinquished his claim to Silvia’s hand, and the duke, at last assured of Valentine’s worth, bestowed his daughter where she had given her affections. Proteus confessed his baseness to his friend, who was so generous in his forgiveness as to offer him even his share in Silvia’s love; at which prospect the pretty page swooned at his master’s feet. On recovering, he exhibited two rings, and uttered mysterious words which established his identity with a certain lady of Verona. Proteus, seized with remorse and re-awakened love for his faithful Julia, vowed perpetual constancy thenceforth; and if she was con-

tent to take him at his word, in the face of all she had been privy to in his double dealings, it is not for us to demur.

An intense, and somewhat fantastic, romance influences every thought and action of this spoiled coquette and beauty; yet in her case, as in that of many passionate natures, it is but the superficial expression of deep and genuine emotions. We have proof of this in the persistent coyness with which she receives her lover's suit—an artful affectation of indifference, which is cast aside at once when she learns that he is going away from her—as well as in her after relations with him.

The scene in which her maid Lucetta brings her a love-letter from Proteus, is considered inimitable for its coquetry:

Jul. Say, say! who gave it thee?

Luc. 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.

Jul. Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker!

Dare you presume to harbor wanton lines?

To whisper and conspire against my youth?

Now, trust me, 'tis an office of great worth,

And you an officer fit for the place.

There, take the paper! see it be return'd;

Or else return no more into my sight.

* * * * *

Jul. And yet, I would I had o'erlook'd 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*.

Fie, fie! how wayward is this foolish love

That, like a testy babe, will scratch the nurse,

And presently, all humbled, kiss the rod!

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 enforc'd my heart to smile!

* * * * *

Jul. This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.

Here is a coil, with protestation!

Go, get you gone! and let the papers lie:

You would be fingering them to anger me.

Jul. * * * * *

O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!

Injurious wasps! to feed on such sweet honey,

And kill the bees, that yield it, with your stings!

I'll kiss each several paper for amends.

And 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.

Look! here is writ—*love-wounded Proteus*:—

Poor wounded name! my bosom, as a bed,

Shall lodge thee, till thy wound be thoroughly heal'd;

And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.

To Julia's lips Shakspeare has given one of the most admired of his love-poems:

Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,

Thou would'st as soon go kindle fire with snow,

As seek to quench the fire of love with words.

* * * * *

The more thou dam'st it up, the more it burns;

The current that with gentle murmur glides,

Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;

But when his fair course is not hindered,

He makes sweet music with the enamel'd stones,

Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge

He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;

And so, by many winding nooks he strays,