

American Players Theatre
Presents



William Shakespeare's

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

2013 Study Guide



American Players Theatre
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THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
2013 STUDY GUIDE

Cover Photo: Travis A. Knight, Abbey Siegworth and Marcus Truschinski.
All photos by Zane Williams.

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If you have any questions or comments regarding the exercises or the information within this study guide, please contact Emily Beck, Education Coordinator, at 608-588-9207, or ebeck@americanplayers.org.

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Who's Who in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

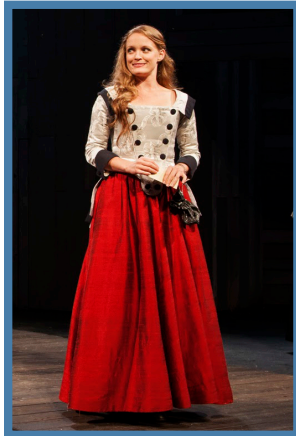
(From *The Essential Shakespeare Handbook*)



Valentine
(Travis A. Knight)
Initially in love with the idea of improving himself through travel, he woos his true love, Silvia, in Milan, but is banished from the city by her father, the Duke, following betrayal from his best friend, Proteus.



Proteus
(Marcus Truschinski)
Initially in love with Julia, he changes his mind the moment he lays eyes on Silvia, his best friend's girlfriend. When she refuses him, he argues he must love her "like a soldier," against her will.



Silvia
(Abbey Siegworth)
The Duke's daughter and the beloved of Valentine; she remains true to Valentine, despite the machinations of Proteus.



Julia
(Susan Shunk)
The beloved of Proteus, she disguises herself as "Sebastian," a page, in order to follow Proteus to Milan, where she is shocked to find him in love with Silvia.



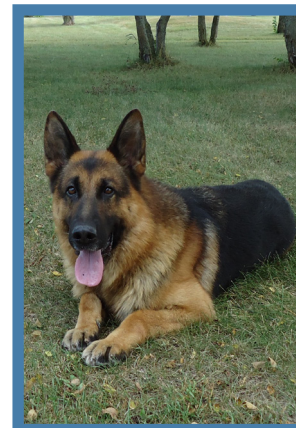
Duke of Milan
(James Pickering)
He hopes his daughter, Silvia, will marry Thurio and banishes Valentine after learning of his affections for Silvia from Proteus.



Speed
(Will Mobley)
Servant to Valentine, he is far more intelligent than his slightly dense master, but is often late for meetings.



Launce
(Steve Haggard)
Servant to Proteus, he delivers moving monologues to his dog, Crab, who remains unmoved by his emotions; his affection for Crab seems to run deeper than his master's deceitful love for either Julia or Silvia.



Crab
(Dillon)
Launce's pet dog who accompanies him on his travels to Milan. He is the cause of some distress for Launce, but is still well-loved by his master and audiences as well.



Who's Who in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

(From *The Essential Shakespeare Handbook*)



Thurio
(Ricco Fajardo)
A foolish suitor for Silvia's hand, he is not thought a serious rival by either Proteus or Valentine.



Lucetta/Ursula
(Kelsey Brennan)
Waiting women for Julia and Silvia, respectively. Lucetta fashions the breeches and codpiece Julia wears to disguise herself as a boy.



Antonio
(Paul Bentzen)
Father of Proteus, when he hears it would be best for his son to broaden his mind rather than stay at home and do nothing, he insists that Proteus follow Valentine to Milan.



Panthino
(Eric Parks)
Servant to Antonio, he speaks freely to his master about ways to enrich Proteus' upbringing.



Eglamour
(Tim Gittings)
Silvia's accomplice in her flight from Milan.



Outlaws
(Brandon Greenhouse, Will Burdin, Rob Fagin, Ro Boddie, Kelsey Brennan, Jack Dwyer, Ryan Imhoff, Eric Parks)
Led by Valentine during his banishment, they are learned and high-bred but have grown savage in the wilderness until Valentine restores their sense of morality.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

About the Play

VALENTINE is leaving his friend Proteus in order to take up residence at the Duke's court in Milan; but Proteus prefers to stay in Verona to be near his love, Julia. Julia talks about falling in love to her waiting woman Lucetta, expressing indifference, and tears up a letter from Proteus. She immediately regrets her action, and attempts to reassemble the letter.

The name's best-known bearer is the third century martyr St. **VALENTINE**, whose feast day of February 14 coincided with the pagan fertility festival of the goddess Juno, all of which led to the modern Valentine's Day.

Proteus' father, Antonio, decides to send Proteus to the Duke's court, where Valentine has fallen in love with the Duke's daughter, Silvia. Valentine's servant, Speed, teases Valentine for this love. At Silvia's request, Valentine has composed a letter for her to give her lover. When he reluctantly gives it to her presuming she is going to send it to another man, she tries to give it back to him to show that it is actually Valentine that she's interested in, and that she had basically asked him to write the letter to himself. It takes Valentine a while to understand what she's trying to tell him, but when he finally does (with some help from Speed) he's elated.

Meanwhile, Proteus leaves Verona, professing constancy and exchanging rings with Julia. Proteus' servant, Launce, mourns the heartlessness of his **DOG**, Crab, who seems unconcerned that they must leave their family and move to Milan. When Proteus arrives in Milan, both gentlemen are ecstatic to see each other again. Valentine asks Proteus to help him elope with Silvia, but Proteus falls in love with her, too, and expresses his determination to have her. Launce and Speed meet and discuss the parting of Proteus from Julia. Julia decides to follow Proteus to Milan, disguising herself as a boy named Sebastian.

Though wealthy people often had **DOGS** in Elizabethan times, guinea pigs are believed to have been more popular because they were affordable.

In cases where the crime committed wasn't serious enough for death or torture, the criminal could be **BANISHED**, or sent away for life. While Shakespeare often used banishment as a punishment in his plays, in real life it was pretty rare.

Proteus informs the Duke of Valentine's plan to run off with Silvia, so the Duke engages Valentine in conversation on the subject of how to reach a lady's chamber at night in order to trick a confession out of him. In an attempt to help the Duke Valentine reveals the rope-ladder and letter intended for Silvia. The furious Duke promptly **BANISHES** Valentine to Mantua.

On his way towards Mantua, Valentine is captured by outlaws in the **FOREST**, but he impresses them greatly and they make him their leader. In a comedic scene, Launce admits to Speed that he knows Proteus is not a good friend, but then he gets sidetracked on a long discussion of the pros and cons of his own love, a milkmaid.

Shakespearean problems are often resolved in the **FOREST**. While it's still a dangerous place (just ask Silvia), it's also a place that characters can come to terms with their problems free from the eyes of society.

The Duke, who wants Silvia to marry the vain and wealthy Thurio, asks Proteus to use his influence to make her forget Valentine. Julia, disguised as a page called Sebastian, arrives in Milan and is disgusted to overhear Proteus wooing Silvia on his own behalf. Silvia rejects Proteus' advances, and approaches Sir Eglamour for help to escape from Milan in order to reach Valentine. Proteus takes

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

About the Play

‘Sebastian’ into his service. He gives her a ring and a letter to take to Silvia, who refuses it and tears up the letter, expressing sympathy for the forsaken Julia, whom ‘Sebastian’ describes to her at length.

Proteus and ‘Sebastian’ follow Silvia out of Milan. She is captured by the outlaws, but rescued by Proteus. But when Silvia rejects him again, Proteus tries to take her by force. Valentine, who has observed everything, comes to her aid. When Proteus apologizes, Valentine very quickly forgives him, and offers him Silvia’s love, which causes Julia (‘Sebastian’) to faint. Her **DISGUISE** is ruined and identity is revealed when Proteus recognizes the ring she is wearing as the one he had given her. Her fidelity and sacrifice rekindles his love for her.

Another favorite of Shakespeare: **DISGUIISING** girls as boys. While serving to free the heroines in his story of social constraints, and making it safe for them to travel (often, again, in forests), it also made for easy costuming as all of the women were played by boys.

Shakespeare often took liberties with his history and geography in his plays, and it is widely thought that Milan would not have had a **DUKE** in power at this time, let alone a lovely daughter.

The outlaws capture the **DUKE** and Thurio, who have come in pursuit of Silvia, and they are brought before Valentine, who reveals his identity. Thurio tries to claim Silvia, but immediately yields when Valentine threatens to fight him. The Duke applauds Valentine’s spirit, repeals his banishment, and gives him Silvia. Valentine obtains pardon for the outlaws. All return to Milan, where **MARRIAGES** are planned between

Valentine and Silvia and between Proteus and Julia.

An English custom in church **MARRIAGES** is Crying the Banns, which announces the intention of a couple to wed. In Elizabethan times, the custom stated that the couple’s intention to marry must be announced in the church three times on three consecutive Sundays or Holy days to allow time for people to raise objections (think three days worth of “speak now or forever hold your peace.”) Any marriage not published beforehand was considered clandestine and illegal. Many couples still take part in this tradition today, though these days English marriages are considered completely legitimate even if they don’t partake in Crying the Banns.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona APT's Production



The *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (or *Two Gents*, as it is often referred) is one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, written around 1593 though scholars are not certain of the actual date. Shakespeare tests some of his favorite comedic themes here – friendship, forgiveness, coming of age and, of course, girls disguising themselves as boys.

APT's very own two gents – Travis Knight who plays Valentine and Marcus Truschinski who plays Proteus – put a lot of thought and effort into how they were going to play their characters. At the beginning of the play, Valentine is setting off on a new adventure, and by the end his life has changed in ways he never pictured. Travis says “Valentine leaves Verona excited to seek his honor and fortune in the big city. He's a young man on the beginning of his journey into adulthood, but with this sense of excitement also comes a naiveté about the world. He hasn't learned that while the world is large and open for opportunity, the only way to learn and evolve is to simply make mistakes. For as much joy and success an individual can have in life, there is a healthy dose of disappointment and heartache. After being sold out by his best friend,

exiled from Milan, and worse yet, banished from his true love, Valentine goes to the underworld and back. By the end of this play Valentine sees the world from a much wider perspective.”

Two Gents has some hurdles to jump in order to make the characters relatable and likeable. Proteus in particular can be a tough one. Here's a guy who throws over his best friend and his girlfriend to get what he thinks he wants. But according to Marcus, Proteus' decision is a complicated one.



“You can't approach a character as a villain. You've got to go to the root of what a person is and then figure out why he makes the choices he makes,” says Marcus. “Proteus is like you or me. He's trying to find his way in the world and along the way he makes some very poor decisions. He has made an oath to himself at the beginning of the play to follow love, no matter the consequences. That is ultimately his gravest mistake. His idea of love is distorted. But in preparation to play the character I determined that he is being true and constant to himself and his oath. While the outside world views him as not such a nice guy, Proteus believes he's being faithful and true to his oath to follow love.”

It's easy to understand that young people make mistakes on their way to adulthood. Even so, it's generally understood that you should be loyal to your friends. So why does Proteus talk himself into betraying his Valentine and Julia?



Marcus says “He’s willing to forsake them because, while his love has transferred from Julia to Silvia, he comes to the conclusion that love outweighs friendship, and what he deems his first love, merely adoration. (Director) Tim Ocel wanted all of the lovers to grow into adults through the course of the play. He pointed out the word “constancy” and its use in the play. Valentine, Silvia and Julia follow this and remain true. Proteus believes he follows it by staying true to himself and his oath. He is the inconstant. It’s been an interesting journey. The audiences have definitely let me know how they feel about Proteus’ decisions. Plus sometimes it’s just fun to be bad.”

True friendship is nothing if not forgiving, and that’s exactly what Valentine does for Proteus (though Julia and Silvia seem a bit less sure about forgiving and forgetting.) Marcus believes that Proteus is truly sincere in his apology and his return to Julia, and Travis says he believes that, too.

According to Travis “I do think that Proteus is truly sorry for what he’s done. He let his emotions dictate his actions and he made a lot of terrible decisions. I think the moment that Valentine lets him have it, Proteus’ mind is cleared and he realizes the error of his ways. I don’t think Valentine could forgive him otherwise.”

He continues, “At some point in our existence we will most likely both inflict emotional pain on someone and we will have it done to us. With that being said, how you handle the aftermath of these situations can help define and shape the individual you will become. In this case, Valentine and Proteus are basically brothers. Valentine says, “From our infancy we have conversed and spent our hours together.” How often have we gotten into hurtful and heated arguments with our siblings or close friends? And how often have we after an unspecific period of time patched things up and moved on? Some situations are harder to forgive than others, but it is something that we as human beings are always trying to achieve. Taking the high road. Valentine understands that the only way to salvage any semblance of normalcy is to forgive his brother. As he says at the end, ‘Who by repentance is not satisfied is nor of heaven nor of earth.’”



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Which leads to the piece of the play that can be a little hard to understand: why offer Silvia to Proteus (if that is what truly what happens in that scene)? Travis thinks it may not be that he’s offering Silvia, so much as it is that he’s offering the kind of love that he has for Silvia. He explains “During this rehearsal process we talked a lot about the “giving away” of Silvia. I believe these two things: 1. Offering up Silvia is a test for Proteus to see if he is truly repentant and sorry for his actions. 2. Valentine doesn’t literally mean he is offering for Proteus to *take* Silvia. He says, ‘All that was mine in Silvia, I give thee.’ ‘All that was mine in Silvia’ could be interpreted as all of the unconditional love that I have in Silvia I also have for you.”



Abbey Siegworth, who plays Silvia, agrees with this point, adding “Valentine also said earlier in that scene ‘love hath 20 pair of eyes.’ Meaning he believes you can love in lots of different ways. The idea that you can give your love away isn’t an idea that Valentine adheres to. He subscribes to the notion that love is everywhere. It’s a little oversimplified, but I think there’s something kind of oddly naïve and beautiful about believing that love is all around us.”

It still leaves them all in a bit of an awkward situation in the end. After all, Proteus not only lied and manipulated, he actually attacked Silvia. Abbey says, “I think it should be noted that Marcus and I are good friends, and he respects women very much. It should also be noted that all the violence on stage has been choreographed like a dance, and repeated over and over again so that we’re all safe. Like a good horror film, it’s about what you don’t see and where your imagination takes you that’s compelling.”

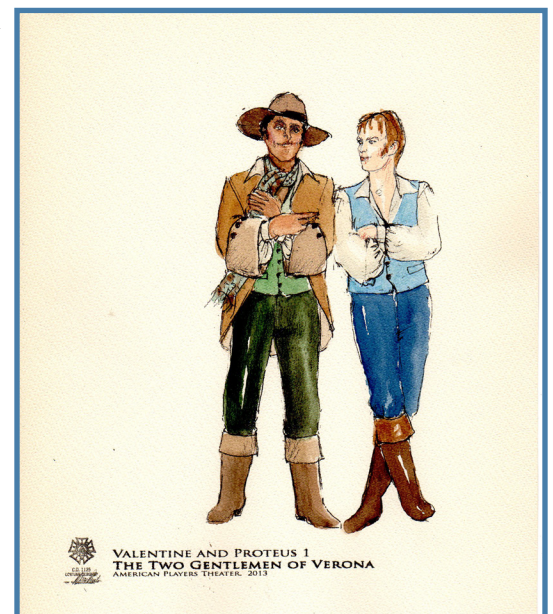
As for what’s in store for the four of them down the road, Abbey, Travis and Marcus agree that there’s a lot of work ahead. Travis says “I think there will be a lot of talking and counseling that goes on. In our world of the play, Valentine has grown a bit more savvy. He has his band of outlaws forgiven and brought to Milan with him because he knows the world of the court is cutthroat and he wants to have his crew with him. In that same vein, he also makes sure that the story of Proteus’ transgressions are told aloud and never forgotten. He’s forgiven, but now everyone, including Valentine and Silvia, will always remember what happened. As Valentine says at the end, ‘one feast, one house, one mutual happiness.’ All of that can still happen, but only once all four of the lovers have a very honest conversation about the things that have taken place and what is to become of them. It won’t be easy, but it’s necessary.”

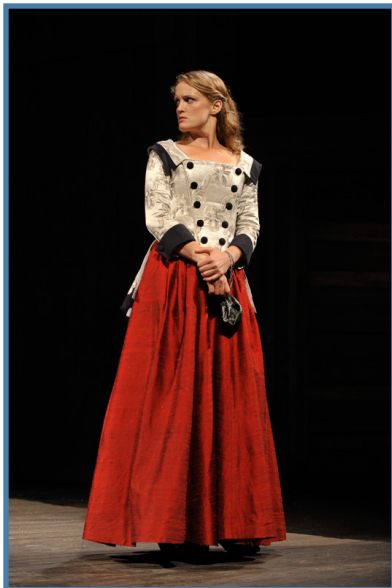
According to Abbey, “at some point in life, we realize that we have to take the bad with the good. Which brings us to the question: what am I willing to forgive? What am I willing to live with? For me, the thing that makes me forgive, or at least take Valentine’s hand, is having watched Julia find the strength to forgive Proteus. It’s a realization that maybe people can grow.”

Abbey thinks there’s one more thing that may have influenced Silvia’s decision to forgive Valentine. She says, “the choice to be with Valentine at the end is one of the few choices Silvia actually gets to make in the play. She’s being controlled left and right by dad, Thurio, Proteus. She’s literally locked in a tower. Also, in that last scene, Valentine is talking about forgiveness, and when you think of it, it’s up to us to uphold that ideal, or not. I think that for Silvia, that’s forgiveness is an ideal that she’d like to adhere to.”

APT is a unique theater for a number of reasons. Working outdoors is great fun, but it also comes with a set of challenges other theaters may not face, like heat, rain, insects and simply trying to make your voice heard throughout the 1,148-seat amphitheater (particularly when the whippoorwills and cicadas try to take over).

This year was Abbey’s first season at APT, and she took all these challenges in stride. Abbey says “I did the Montana Shakespeare in





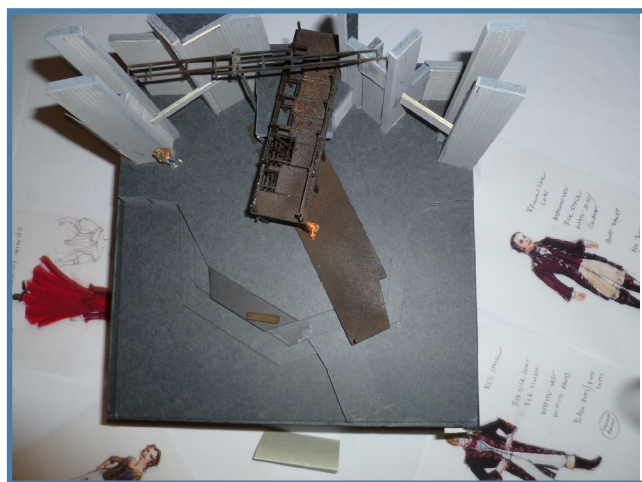
the Park tour for four summers and I loved the rigor of that physically. I'm used to certain elements like wind and rain and heat. Although I don't remember the mosquitoes in Montana being as fruitful as they are here. But I've embraced the bug spray."

Continuing, Abbey explains "I have admired the work here from afar for a long time, and auditioned for many years. To say 'I love it' would be an oversimplification. The culture around creating theatre here, and the culture of excellence and APT artistry is unparalleled. I say that because it takes such diligence and such rigor to stick to the

guidelines set forth by the company, and you can see that in the work. All the work. In the design, the acting, the clarity of stories. All of it. The ambition to be as good as we can and then rise above even that. It's extremely unique. And the audiences make it so pleasurable you forget that all those elements are there because; everyone's going through the same thing, the audience, the actors, it all kind of falls away when you're in the play. "

While the rewards of working outside may often outweigh the problems, there are still lots of things to keep in consideration. Like the actors, designers also have to work with (and around) nature. Nathan Stuber, who designed the *Two Gents* set, says "The biggest challenge is obviously the weather, as far as keeping things waterproof (water makes wood expand and contract and makes metal rust). If it's indoor theater you can build something simple with flats. Outside, we often have to add a rust proofing agent and then add multiple layers of paint to keep the water from doing what it does and ruining things. You have to keep the sun and heat in mind as well. A lot of the time, the designs might not balance because at the matinees you have to consider the bright light coming down on the set, so anything white or light-colored can blind the audience or the actors. At the same time, you don't want a lot of black things up there that absorb heat. So, it's a delicate process."

The design process itself is a little different at APT. The theater begins design discussions well in advance of the season so everything's ready to go when the company arrives in May to begin rehearsing. According to Nate "The design process begins almost a year out. First we find out who we're working with. We start conversations with the director; spend a lot of time reading and discussing the play. Usually in November or December of the year before, we have two meetings with the entire design team. That first meeting as a scene designer, I try to come with some images on paper, that's kind of a launching pad."



"It also really depends on the director," Nate continues.

"Sometimes the director has a really clear idea of what they want. This is the fourth time Tim has directed *Two Gents*. So, he had some very clear ideas as to what he did (and did not) want to do. I was able to come to that first meeting with a design that was probably 70% of what you see right now. The second meeting is usually when all the designers bring their preliminary designs. It's just another chance for everyone to look at it and give feedback."

All the work brings us to the amazing stage the APT artisans developed for this play. But it's not just about how the stage looks, the ideas that it represents matter a lot to how the play is perceived and appreciated. Nate says



“Tim was very open to exploring different aesthetic venues. My first pass at the design was an open, Italian courtyard because we go from Verona to Milan, but he was not interested in that. He said the play felt more English than Italian, it was darker, he doesn’t find it to be a funny play.”

“It’s about exploring the relationships between those four kids,” Nate continues. “And what he wanted on stage was a metaphor rather than a real tangible place. He

was interested in the idea of the obstacles that get in your way as you grow up. That’s where I got the idea for the pier. There are these large, daunting things that you have to figure out or how to manipulate or how to get around or work around. He had this idea of climbing; also because *Two Gents* is a sort of prequel to *Romeo and Juliet*. There are these balcony scenes. So, we played with that idea and tried to get people up high, trying to push the action forward using the lower thrust. My idea with that was, let’s give them a big obstacle, but also a jungle gym to play on. But there’s also a lot of talk about travel, so it can also serve as a pier. It’s all about giving the space meaning without having to spell it out literally.”



The Two Gentlemen of Verona Photo Summary



In the beginning of the play, long-time friends from Verona, Proteus and Valentine say goodbye as Valentine heads to Milan for adventure while Proteus stays home for love.

Proteus: All happiness bechance to thee in Milan.
Valentine: As much to you at home, and so farewell.
Act 1, Scene 1



Julia reads a love letter from Proteus and , after some debate, decides she loves him back.

Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ,
Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus, To
the Sweet Julia – that I'll tear away; And yet
I will not, sith so prettily.
Julia, Act 1, Scene 2



Proteus' father, Antonio, decides it would be best for him to join Valentine in Milan rather than stay at home.

The execution of it shall make known; Even with
the speediest expedition, I will dispatch him to
the Emperor's court.
Antonio, Act 1, Scene 3



Valentine gets a job working for the Duke of Milan and falls in love with his daughter, Silvia. Silvia asks Valentine to write a letter for her lover, and then gives the letter right back to Valentine to show that she loves him.

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.
Speed, Act 2, Scene 1 ¹¹

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Photo Summary



Upon leaving for Milan, Proteus and Julia exchange vows and rings.

Julia: Keep this remembrance for thy Julia's sake.
Proteus: Why then, we'll make exchange: here, take you this.
Act 2, Scene 2



When Proteus arrives in Milan, he meets Silvia and instantly falls in love with her. He then decides he will be happier betraying his friendship with Valentine to win Silvia's love.

I to myself am dearer than a friend, For love is still most precious in itself...
Proteus, Act 2, Scene 6



When Proteus tells the Duke that Valentine and Silvia mean to elope, the Duke banishes Valentine.

By heaven, my wrath shall far exceed the love I ever bore my daughter or thyself. Begone, I will not hear thy vain excuse, but, as though lov'st thy life, make speed from hence.
Duke of Milan, Act 3, Scene 1



A heart-broken Valentine and his servant, Speed, leave Milan and take refuge with other outlaws in the woods.

Outlaw: What says though? Wilt thou be of our consort?
Say 'Ay', and be the captain of us all...
Valentine: I will take your offer and will live with you...
Act 4, Scene 1

The Two Gentlemen of Verona Photo Summary



Julia, disguised as a boy named Sebastian, arrives in Milan in search of Proteus, only to find him serenading Silvia, and declaring his love for her.

It hath been the longest night that e'er I
watched, and the most heaviest.
Julia, Act 4, Scene 2



Proteus takes “Sebastian” into his service and asks him to give Silvia the ring that formerly belonged to Julia

Sebastian, I have entertained thee partly that I have
need of such a youth that can with some discretion
do my business...Go presently, and take this ring
with thee, and deliver it to Madam Silvia.
Proteus, Act 4, Scene 4



When “Sebastian” takes Silvia the ring, Silvia refuses and runs away, only to be captured by the outlaws.

O Valentine, this I endure for thee!
Silvia, Act 5, Scene 3



Proteus “rescues” her and when she still refuses him, he tries to take her love by force.

Madam, this service I have done for you, to hazard life and
rescue you from him that would have forced your honour and
your love. Vouchsafe me for my need but one fair look...
Proteus, Act 5, Scene 4

The Two Gentlemen of Verona Photo Summary



Secretly watching the events unfold, Valentine challenges Proteus and saves Silvia. Proteus, immediately ashamed, asks for forgiveness. Valentine pardons him, and offers Proteus the love he has for Silvia.

Proteus, I am sorry I must never trust thee more, but count the world a stranger for the sake. The private wound is deepest.
Valentine, Act 5, Scene 4



“Sebastian” also present, accidentally produces Proteus’ ring. When Proteus realizes “Sebastian” is Julia, he falls back into love with her and they reunite.

What is in Silvia’s face but I may spy more fresh in Julia’s, with a constant eye?
Proteus, Act 5, Scene 4



The Duke arrives, and at Valentine’s insistence pardons all the outlaws, and grants permission to Valentine and Silvia to pursue their relationship.

Sir Valentine, thou art a gentleman, and well derived; take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserved her.
Duke of Milan, Act 5, Scene 4



At the conclusion of the play Valentine and Proteus reunite as friends, and Valentine proclaims his excitement for their futures together.

Come Proteus, ‘tis your penance but to hear the story of your loves discovered. That done, our day of marriage shall be yours, one feat, one house, one mutual happiness.
Valentine, Act 5, Scene 4



Two Gentlemen of Verona

Classroom Activities



A BOXFUL OF CHARACTER

What's On for Today and Why

In this lesson students will create life boxes based on the text of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and present these boxes to the class. A life box is a container with everyday items that relate to a character. Choosing items to represent elements of a character will necessitate careful reading of the text. Using details from the text to explain their choices will require students to use critical thinking. Sharing their creations will expand all of the students' understanding of the characters.

This lesson plan will take two class periods.

What You Need

The text of the play, or a storybook version of the play

What To Do

Preparation: students will have read at least halfway through the play. For younger elementary students, a storybook version of the play works well.

1. Explain the concept of a character life box. A life box is a container of carefully chosen items that represent a particular character in a play. The box must contain six to eight things the character might use daily or have as a keepsake. (For younger students, four to six items may be a more manageable number). A line from the play or an event in the story must be cited to justify each item. The lines can be either spoken by the character or by another character in the play. No photos—items only. For example, for Julia students might choose a ring (for her constancy) and a mask (for her disguise). A shoe box is a good container, but other appropriate containers are okay (pillowcase, purse, etc.).
2. Assign students to work in pairs. The students pick a character—often, providing a list of suggested characters is helpful, especially for younger students— and gather items to put in their box. They find text or examples to support each item choice and record a description of the item, an explanation of why it was chosen, and a corresponding phrase or sentence from the play. This list will be handed in.
3. The students bring in the finished projects and present them to the class. They share their items and explanations by holding up and describing each item and reading or telling what lines of text support their choice.

How Did It Go?

Did the students find six to eight items? Did the items represent the character appropriately? Could the students support their choices with text? A discussion of which items clearly defined each character helps students differentiate and understand character motivation and development. If you choose to start this project when the students are only halfway through a play, you could extend the project by having them add more items to the box as they finish the play.

This lesson was provided by Linda G. Wolford, School District 5, Columbia, South Carolina through Folger Shakespeare Library.

CAROL JAGO'S FOUR BOXES

1. Provide each student with a large sheet of white paper and ask them to fold it in four.
2. Based on in-class reading or discussion of a theme or plot within the play (revenge, unrequited love, betrayal, lies, friendship, etc.), have the students in the FIRST BOX, draw a picture of a powerful image they had during the reading or discussion. You may assign the entire class one theme or plot, or you could have the students choose the image that spoke most strongly to them. This image may or may not directly relate to the example with the play - the student may choose to represent something from their life or the play, whichever is stronger. Not everyone's an artist, and artistic talent is not required. Just a sincere effort to get at what's in their mind's eye. Encourage them to draw a metaphor of those thoughts, feelings or themes.
3. In the SECOND BOX, put that picture into words. For example, "Unrequited love is like trying to hold on to something while you're sliding down a glass wall: the less the other likes you, the steeper the slope."
4. In the THIRD BOX, have the students pretend that they are the teacher. Have them write down what or how they would teach the theme or plot discussed.
5. In the FOURTH BOX, have them write a poem, create a word collage, write a quote from the play, a piece of a song or in any other way that suited them to respond to the scene or theme drawn.

It can take a single class period, or be stretched out over two or three. It provides the option of allowing students to explore themes or scenes that they found powerful in the play, and to examine this moment from various perspectives.

From Carol Jago's With Rigor for All

SCATTERBRAINED SOLILOQUIES

What's on for today and why

Small groups of students will look at a famous soliloquy or monologue whose lines have been written on separate pieces of paper and then scrambled. As the students work to reassemble their scrambled passages, they will become more aware of sentence structure, meter, meaning, characterization and vocabulary.

What you'll need

You will need one scatterbrained soliloquy or monologue packet for each small group; each packet must be printed on different colored paper.

Preparation

To create the packets, you will need to divide up the speech into at least ten sections, writing in large letters on white typing paper. Preserve the poetry in your transcribing (don't turn it into prose as you copy it), but feel free to create a break in the mid-line or mid-sentence. When you have broken up the passage into at least ten sections, copy the sets in different colors, as many different colors as there are groups participating.

Examples of soliloquies you can use are:

Proteus, I.iii "Thus have I shunned the fire..."

Julia/Lucetta, II.vii "O, knowest thou not his looks are my soul's food?..."

Proteus, IV.ii "Already have I been false to Valentine..."

This lesson will take one to two class periods.

1. Divide the class into small groups of three to five students, and assign each a group a color. Explain that they will be looking at a passage from the current play, trying to make sense of its meaning.
2. First, take all of your scrambled packets, mix them together for a rainbow effect and throw them up into the air in two or three dramatic tosses.
3. Once the pieces of paper have settled to the floor, assure the students that you have not gone crazy. Remind each group of its assigned color and ask them to pick up all of the individual pieces of the color assigned to their group. Each group should end up with the same number of pieces.
4. Briefly set up the context of the speech, and explain that they should put the speech in order, laying out the papers on their desktops or on the floor. (No peeking in their books is allowed.)
5. Create a word bank on the blackboard, noting unfamiliar words, phrases and concepts. Ask a few probing questions that might help them figure out the meanings for themselves. If students get stuck on a particular word or phrase, have the students refer to dictionaries or Shakespearean glossaries.
6. They can now put the various pieces of paper in order and be prepared to explain/defend all of the choices made. Why did you put a certain line where you did? What clues led to your group's final order?
7. When the groups are finished, pick one group to read its assembled passage aloud, while other groups check it against their finished sequences.

8. After one group has gone, check the order of the lines in each group's soliloquy, asking each group to explain its choices. List on the board the criteria used to determine line order. Compare and contrast the different versions.
9. When the entire class has decided on the best, most accurate version, tack the pieces together in order on a bulletin board, or punch holes in them and string them together for a hanging display. The possibilities are endless. Inform the students that they may now consult their texts to check the order of the speech.

Were the students able to reassemble the soliloquy in logical and meaningful ways? Did the explanations offered by group members reflect attentiveness to meaning, sound and rhyme, characterization, compatibility with prior events occurring in the play, etc?

This lesson was provided by Russ Bartlett through Folger Shakespeare Library.