

INDIANA REPERTORY THEATRE

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

by William Shakespeare

September 16 – October 19, 2014, on the IRT's OneAmerica Stage

STUDY GUIDE

edited by Richard J Roberts & Milicent Wright
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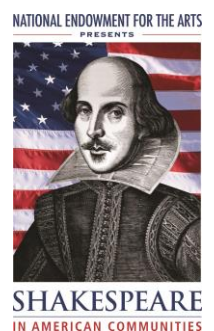
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The Two Gentlemen of Verona

by William Shakespeare

The grass is always greener, especially in Milan. Best friends Valentine and Proteus are in love with the same woman: will it destroy their friendship or teach them a lesson? Join us for an adventure in laughter and frivolity as we meet a circus of outlaws, a cross-dressing heroine, a dog-loving clown, and two friends who discover that love isn't an easy game to play. No matter what Shakespeare play you are reading, students need to see and hear one of his works to truly understand why we continue to study, read, and attend Shakespeare's plays. And who doesn't love a good comedy?

Estimated length: 2 hours and 30 minutes

Recommended for students in grades 7 through 12

THEMES, ISSUES, & TOPICS

Friendship vs. Love
 Betrayal and Forgiveness
 Shakespeare's Language
 Puns, simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration
 Use of prose and verse
 Comedic Structure
 The foundations of future Shakespearean comedies

Student Matinees at 10:00 AM: September 23, 24, 25, 26, 30; October 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15

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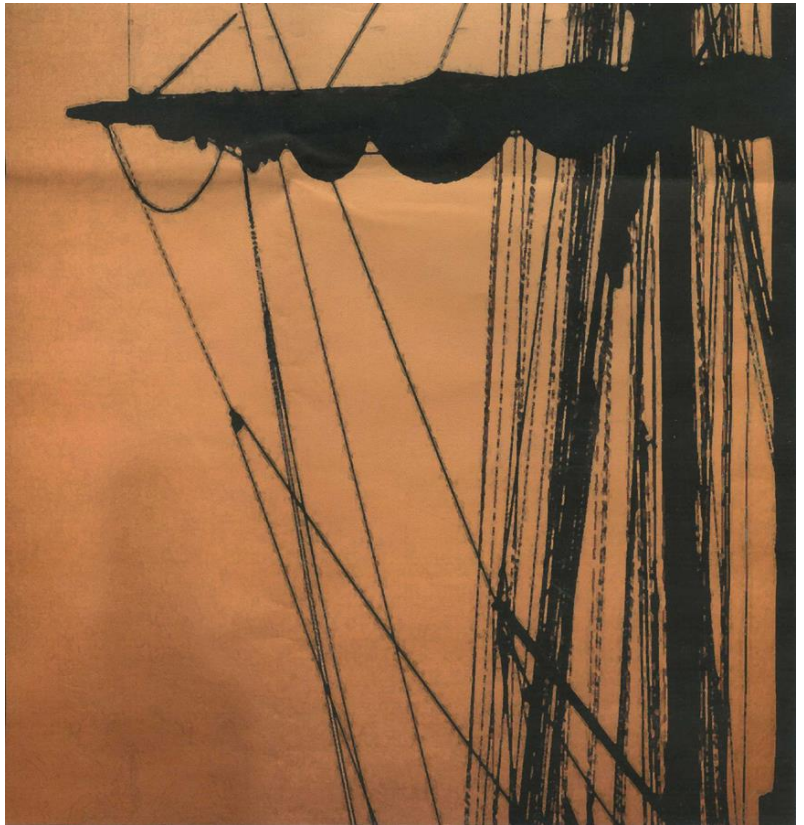
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The Story of the Play

Shakespeare's first romantic comedy begins in rustic Verona, where two best friends part ways. Valentine is off to see Milan and find his fortune, while Proteus decides to stay at home near Julia, whom he loves from afar. Across town, Julia's maid Lucetta gives her a love letter from Proteus. Although she pretends to be angry, Julia is secretly delighted. But Proteus's father, Antonio, decides to send his son to join Valentine and make connections in Milan. Proteus and Julia bid each other a tearful farewell, while Proteus's servant, Launce, tells us of his emotional parting from his own family.



Scenic designer Robert Mark Morgan uses this image of an 18th century ship's rigging to suggest travel in the IRT's production of The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Meanwhile, in the big city, lowly Valentine has fallen in love with Silvia, the daughter of the Duke of Milan. She hires Valentine to write a letter to her love—although he doesn't realize that the intended recipient is himself until his servant Speed explains the situation. Proteus arrives and the friends are reunited; but as soon as Proteus sees Silvia, he too is smitten, forgetting all about Julia. When Valentine confides his plans to elope with Silvia, Proteus betrays his best friend and tells the Duke, who banishes Valentine from Milan.

In the forest, Valentine is captured by a band of outlaws who turn out to be exiled gentlemen as he is. Impressed by his (false) bravado, they elect Valentine as their leader.

Back in Verona, Julia misses her Proteus. Disguising herself as a boy for safety, she journeys to Milan, only to find Proteus and the pompous Thurio both trying to woo Silvia. In her disguise as Sebastian, Julia gets herself hired as a page by Proteus, who sends her to deliver a ring to Silvia—a ring that Silvia rejects.

Interested in neither Proteus nor Thurio, Silvia escapes to the forest under the protection of Eglamour, a widowed courtier. The Duke and Thurio set out in pursuit, followed by Proteus and Julia (still disguised as Sebastian). The characters all meet in the wild woods, where they find kidnapping, violence, and betrayal, as well as forgiveness, reconciliation, and love.

And did we mention there is a dog?

Shakespeare's Playground

by Janet Allen, Executive Artistic Director

We launch the IRT's 43rd season with an homage to our greatest English language dramatist, William Shakespeare, on the event of his 450th birthday. Born in 1564, it is remarkable that Shakespeare's legacy resonates today so vividly, a testament to the strength of his artistry in a very fickle field. If, as I like to imagine him, he was a scrappy seeker of fortune—and perhaps the occasional good bottle of ale!—who gave little thought to his memory or legacy (a la *Shakespeare in Love*), he might be the most surprised among us that his work is enshrined and produced at this remove through time and geography.

We had a great living testament to that sustained power last summer when we convened a state-wide meeting of Shakespeare practitioners to discuss how we could together celebrate the anniversaries of his birthday and his death (2014 and 2016), and sixty people from all over the state arrived to participate! The discussion was vigorous and exciting, as people from many parts of our state—including funders and community leaders, educators and theatre producers—united in the belief that Shakespeare's work continues to have significant impact in our lives today.

The IRT is celebrating with what is arguably Shakespeare's first play: I saw "arguably" because there is so little record of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*'s early life (no early production history, no quarto publications) that it's impossible to date it. This blank slate suggests that it was likely written before Shakespeare was a force to be reckoned with in the theatre community. The play is certainly filled with a youthful zeal that is accountable either by Shakespeare's own youth, or his relative youth as a writer.

Travis A. Knight & Marcus Truschinski in The Two Gentlemen of Verona at American Players Theatre, 2013, directed by Tim Ocel, who directs the current IRT production.





Michael Marcus and Martin Bassindale in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, now playing at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Great Britain.

We selected *Two Gents* for this birthday celebration for a number of reasons: The IRT has never produced it (we've done 28 Shakespeare productions). It will delight both our adult and youth audience (in its exploration of young love and parental authority). It has had a resurgence, almost a rediscovery, by major Shakespeare festivals in the recent past (from the nearby American Players Theatre in Wisconsin, to the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, England), where it has been found to contain much more depth and fascinating emotional terrain than practitioners have previously given it credit for.

Shakespeare's plays ride the waves of culture and time: they come and go in popularity related to the epoch and our preoccupations, and *Two Gents* has cycled up to meet the millennial generation and give it context. We recognize quickly the young men of this play: close childhood pals whose early adult life choices are separating them. One wants to leave home to see the world and seek his fortune; one remains behind, held by love. But the separation of the two friends is itself the painful fulcrum of the play—it's the primal loss, and what catapults the action forward to the last scene of the play. There we wait with bated breath to discover whether the friendship will survive the youthful indiscretions that have tested these two as they move from youth to adulthood. While seeming to write an entertainment about young love and its fickleness, Shakespeare has also created a framework for a much deeper exploration of the power of friendship to survive over time, the human frailty of betrayal, and the conflicts created when love (or is it merely obsession?) intervenes and upsets the precarious balance of human nature.

Friendship, Love, Youth

by Tim Ocel, Director

Julia, Valentine, Proteus, and Sylvia—I cannot think of better examples of a generation on the brink of its potential. They teem with a boldness that is impetuous and adventurous. They have the right stuff in them to shape a New World. They are not perfect; they trust too much and see too little. Their emotional worlds are tight and centered on themselves. They are three parts constant, one part inconstant. They make mistakes. They lose their innocence.

This loss of innocence is a “light bulb” moment for them; a sudden slap in the face, a realization that they were wrong about something very, very important to them.

This moment, which we all experience, is a part of coming into the world. It is unfortunate, but almost always unavoidable. Love is often a part of this moment; so are Attachment, Intimacy, and Friendship. When it happens, you find yourself in a kind of hellish shock, because you didn’t see it coming, and you had no idea you could be such a Fool. It hurts with the realization of what Hurt is; it thickens the skin for the very first time.

What you do with that realization is the opening paragraph of your adult life; and that moment punctuates the final scene of Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*—possibly Shakespeare’s earliest scene of forgiveness and unqualified love. This is the scene that has puzzled scholars for years; but in a world that puts into conflict Friendship and Romantic Love, what else can Valentine do? And, in fact, to forgive Proteus is what he does with his newfound maturity and his constancy. One can only hope that Sylvia understands the gesture.

Though the play might be about the growth and alteration that life experience brings, it also contains two important servants, Launce and Speed, who never change, for their job is to

maintain. They are the constant world that comes ’round every 24 hours. There is also a dog, named Crab, to drive home the point that if Dog is Man’s Best Friend, then people come in a pale second. But the reward of a slightly thicker skin is that the next time you are a Fool—and it *is* going to happen again—it won’t hurt quite so much, realizing that to Live includes trusting and sometimes failing; and also remembering that to Love and Go Forth, despite it all, is worth it.

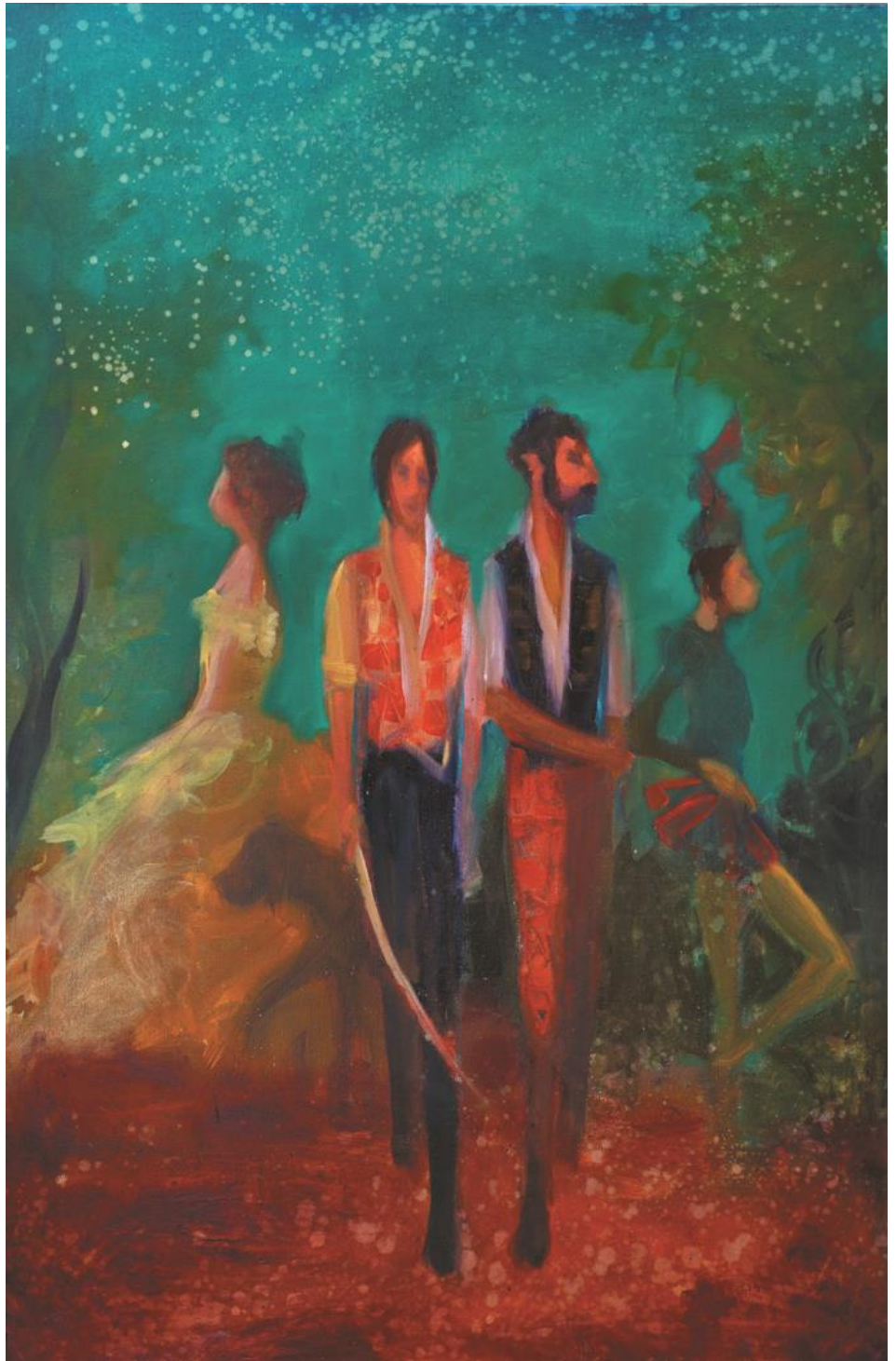


Works of Art

This summer the IRT initiated a unique collaboration with one of Indianapolis's most prolific artists, Kyle Ragsdale. IRT executive artistic director Janet Allen worked with Kyle to create an original piece of art to represent each of the IRT's nine plays that make up the upcoming 2014-15 season. The IRT will use these images throughout the season and display them in the theatre. The IRT will be hosting a First Friday in October to unveil these original pieces as well as some of Kyle Ragsdale's other pieces.

"For the work I did for the IRT I wanted the viewer to be a part of the storytelling, purposely only hinting at what the play represents and allowing each person to be drawn in and become interested in the play. The plays this season are amazing, and I really wanted my work to be awesome—not only for me and the IRT, but for the audiences."

—*Kyle Ragsdale*



The Two Gentlemen of Verona by Kyle Ragsdale

"We are so grateful and incredibly fortunate that Kyle accepted our invitation to create original art for us. He creates such theatrical work. It was fascinating to see how an artist reacted to our art. We can't wait to show off his work as we show off our work."

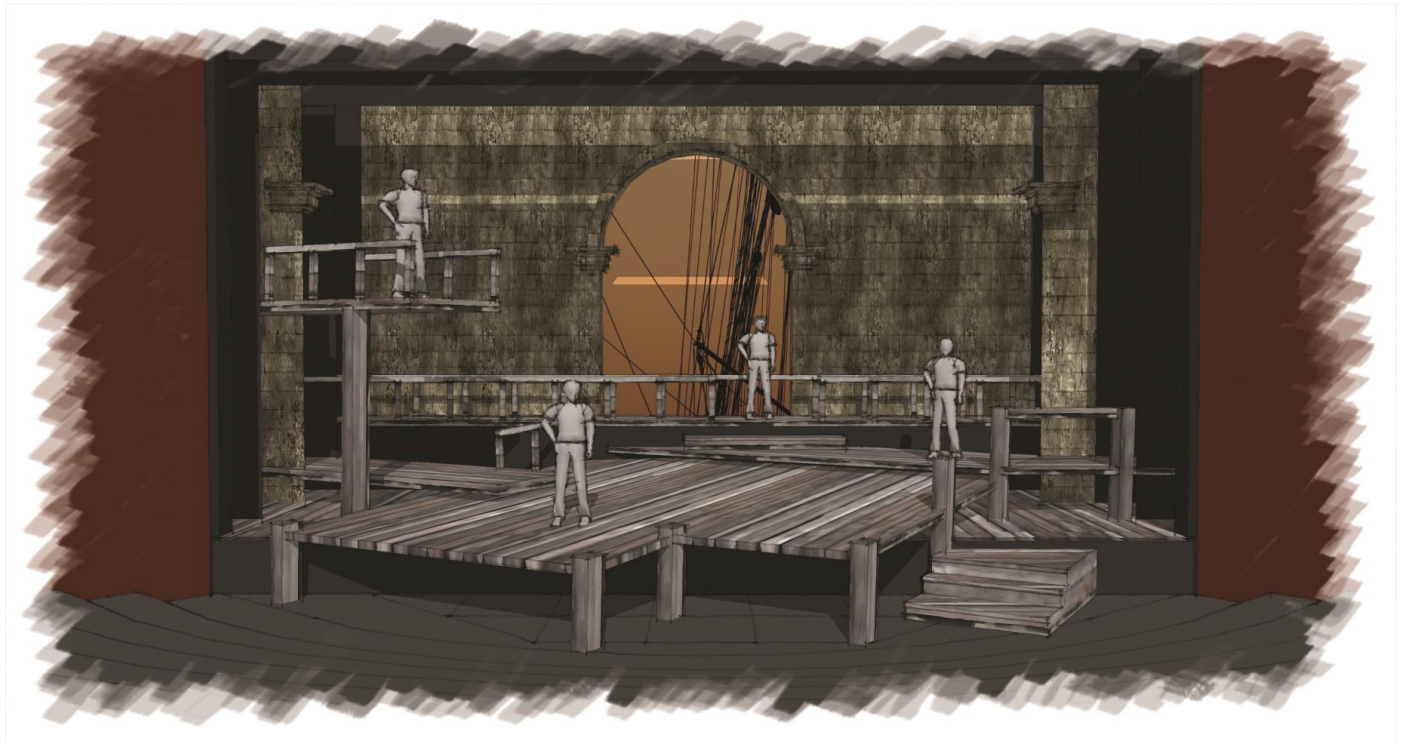
—*Janet Allen*

from Verona to Milan (and the forest)

Robert Mark Morgan Scenic Designer

Designing is, and always should be, a team art form. You begin a process with talented colleagues, from the director and fellow designers to the unsung heroes actually putting the final product together: carpenters, welders, painters, and prop people. For the process to work most efficiently, there must be a sense that the best idea wins, regardless of who came up with it.

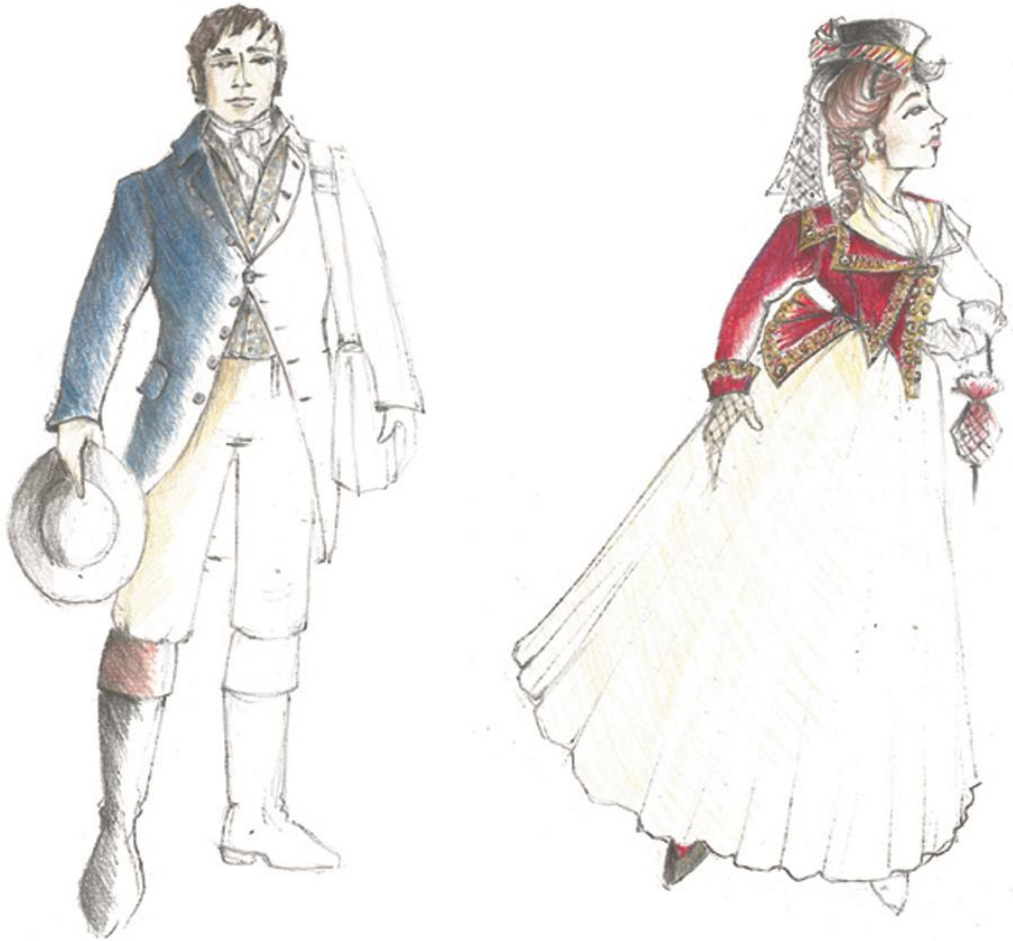
This play is a lot like that hodgepodge of personalities, talents, and ideas all mixing and intersecting. It is around such a sense of intersection that we have tried to design an environment that is part docks, part forest, part public meeting place. Like all of us, the characters in this play are constantly traveling to new destinations; and it is through these intersections, like the streets of our everyday lives, that the characters discover their own humanity and humility.



Preliminary scenic drawing by designer Robert Mark Morgan.

Dorothy Marshall Englis Costume Designer

The obligation of the costume design is much like the direct line of this play's plot: to make clear the different worlds of Verona, Milan, and the forest, in order that the characters' aspirations, frustrations, and loves have a clear context. With the seeds of *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* in mind, we have chosen to set the play somewhere between the 1780s and the 1820s. This era was a time of political and social transition. Our characters exist in a world both romantic and dangerous—much like their relationships.



Costume renderings for Proteus and Silvia by designer Dorothy Marshall Englis.

Andrew Hopson Composer & Sound Designer

"Location, location, location" is not just a real estate truism; in this play it is critical to the plot, as it establishes the social standing of all of the characters and drives their actions. Verona is rough and earthy, a cultural backwater; thus the Veronese well-to-do to send their children out into the world to acquire some polish and seek royal favor. Most of the play occurs in the Duke's court in Milan, which clings to its *ancien régime* tradition and opulence. Finally, the thieves' hideout in the wild woods is populated by fallen aristocrats who hope one day to return to civilization. The music for this play therefore attempts to portray the characters in the play as products of their environment, with the raw energy of Verona's string player, the formal elegance of the Court harpsichord, and the confused and slightly scary sounds of the Den of Thieves.

Meet the Characters

in VERONA

The Two Gentlemen



VALENTINE

Charles Pasternak

One of the two gentlemen of the title, Valentine bids farewell to his best friend, Proteus, and leaves Verona to find his fortune in the wide world. Although his name suggests love, Valentine scoffs at the idea until he falls for Silvia, the daughter of the Duke of Milan.



PROTEUS

Chris Bresky

In Greek mythology, Proteus was a sea god who could change his shape at will; today we use the adjective “protean” to describe something that is easily or frequently changeable. Although he is one of the two gentlemen of the title, Proteus’s behavior is not always gentlemanly, especially to his best friend, Valentine, and the woman he says he loves, Julia.

Their Servants



SPEED – *servant to Valentine*

Scot Greenwell

Speed is a page, a young male servant who does odd jobs and delivers messages, a sort of personal aide. The tradition derives from the pages of the medieval knights. Speed’s name reflects his quick wit, but not necessarily the speed with which he delivers messages.



LAUNCE – *servant to Proteus*

Ryan Artzberger

The name Launce probably derives from Sir Lancelot of the Arthurian legends, an ironic choice considering Launce’s role in the play as a servant who is most chivalrous to his dog. The role of Launce is thought to have been originally played by the Globe Theatre’s famous clown, Will Kemp.

Others in Verona



JULIA

Lee Stark

Julia is a very popular name in Renaissance love poetry. Shakespeare's Julia, however, at first seems not to be pleased to receive overtures of love from Proteus. But soon she reveals her true feelings, and later she disguises herself as a page boy named Sebastian, in order to follow Proteus to Milan.



ANTONIO – *father to Proteus*

Robert Neal

At first he is content for his son, Proteus, to remain in Verona; but eventually he decides it would be good for Proteus to broaden his mind and make connections at court, and he sends Proteus to join Valentine in Milan.



LUCETTA – *servant to Julia*

Ashley Wickett

Although she is not necessarily older than Julia, Lucetta is definitely wiser in the ways of the world—and of men. She helps Julia disguise herself as a boy for her journey to Milan.



PANTHINO – *servant to Antonio*

Matt Holzfeind

He may be a servant, but Panthino is not shy about offering advice to his master, Antonio, about what would be best for Antonio's son, Proteus.



CRAB – a dog

George Ward

The only dog in all of Shakespeare's plays, Crab is Launce's best friend, despite the fact that sometimes he behaves like an animal.

in MILAN

(pronounced MILL-an in Shakespeare's play)



SILVIA

Ashley Wickett

The very eligible daughter of the Duke of Milan, Silvia is pursued by many men, but she rejects them all—until she meets Valentine. Her name originates from the Latin word for forest, *silva*; its meaning is “spirit of the wood.” Today the adjective “sylvan” is still associated with woods and trees.



THE DUKE OF MILAN

father to Silvia

Robert Neal

Like most fathers, the Duke wants what's best for his daughter—and to him that means the wealthy court gentleman Thurio, not the poor visitor from Verona, Valentine.



THURIO

suitor to Silvia

Matt Holzfeind

A wealthy but foolish gentleman who pursues Silvia and has her father's consent to marry. His path to marriage is challenged by both Valentine and Proteus.



EGLAMOUR

a courtier

Scot Greenwell

Sir Eglamour of Artois is a 14th century Middle English poem about a knight who must accomplish three heroic tasks to win his love. The root *amour* embodies romantic ideas.



URSULA

servant to Silvia

Matt Holzfeind

Ursula might be called a duenna, which is an older woman acting as a governess and companion to a young woman; a chaperone.



A HOST

where Julia lodge

Robert Neal

A kindly innkeeper whose friendly offer to help Julia leads to heartbreak.

in the FOREST

The Outlaws

Banished from Milan for a variety of petty offenses, these gentlemen have joined into a band of outlaws in need of a leader—a position that they “request” Valentine to fill.

Ryan Artzberger



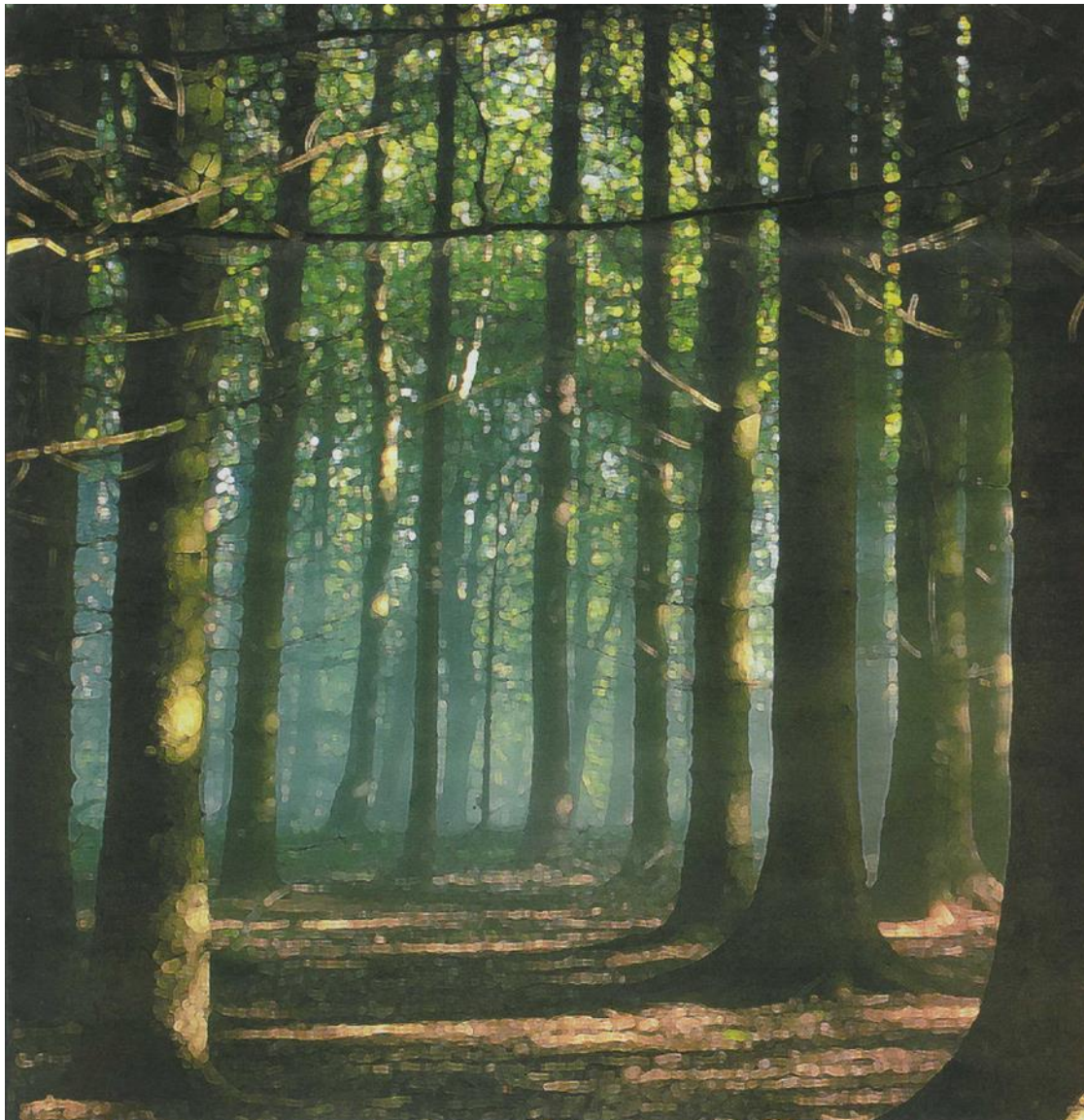
Scot Greenwell



Lee Stark



Ashley Wickett



This image was selected by scenic designer Robert Mark Morgan to represent the forest in the IRT's production of The Two Gentlemen of Verona. It is painted on translucent cloth and lit from the back, with select glimmers of light shining through.

Shakespeare Endures

by Richard J Roberts, Dramaturg

Although William Shakespeare is generally considered the greatest dramatist in the English language, few facts are known about his life. Only a handful of legal documents verify his existence. Tradition has it that he was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, a small market town, on April 23, 1564. His father was a glove-maker who became High Bailiff of Stratford, a position similar to our mayor.

As the son of a leading citizen, Shakespeare would have gone to Stratford's highly regarded grammar school. Class was in session year round for nine hours a day. The curriculum consisted almost entirely of Latin: grammar, reading, writing, and recitation. By the time Shakespeare was a youth, many traveling theatre companies of significance had visited Stratford, so it is fair to guess that he saw some of them and admired their art.

At age 18, Shakespeare married 26-year-old Anne Hathaway. Six months later, their daughter Susanna was born; two years later came twins, Hamnet and Judith. We know nothing of the circumstances by which Shakespeare left Stratford and his family to become an actor and playwright in London; but by 1594 Shakespeare was established at the center of theatrical activity, for he is recorded as a shareholder in the Globe Theatre.

Over the next fifteen years, Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, several narrative poems, and more than 150 sonnets. He became the most popular playwright in London's highly competitive theatrical world. He was granted a coat of arms, thus officially making him a gentleman, and he bought sizeable pieces of real estate in and around Stratford with his earnings.

Shakespeare wrote for an open stage that thrust into the center of a teeming circle of commoners and aristocrats representing all layers of British society. His actors wore cast-offs from their aristocratic patrons: whether senators of ancient Rome, courtiers of English kings, or fairies in Illyria, his characters wore the same clothes as their audience. No plywood cut-out trees or cardboard castle walls cluttered his stage; it was words alone that created smoky caves, open fields, moonlit forests, or glittering palaces in his audiences' eyes. Lighting was provided by the afternoon sun, shining through the theatre's open roof.



This painting discovered in 2006 by the Cobbe family in Dublin is thought to be the only portrait of William Shakespeare painted during his lifetime.

Shakespeare's plays exhibit not only a fine sense of poetry and stagecraft, but also an excellent awareness of the political and literary atmosphere in which he lived. These were tempestuous times socially and politically, and Shakespeare used his plays metaphorically to suggest how, in a changing society, order could be made out of chaos. The very name of his home theatre, the Globe, acknowledged not only Columbus's earth-changing geographical discovery of barely one hundred years earlier, but also the universal meaning of the stories acted out on the stage at its core.

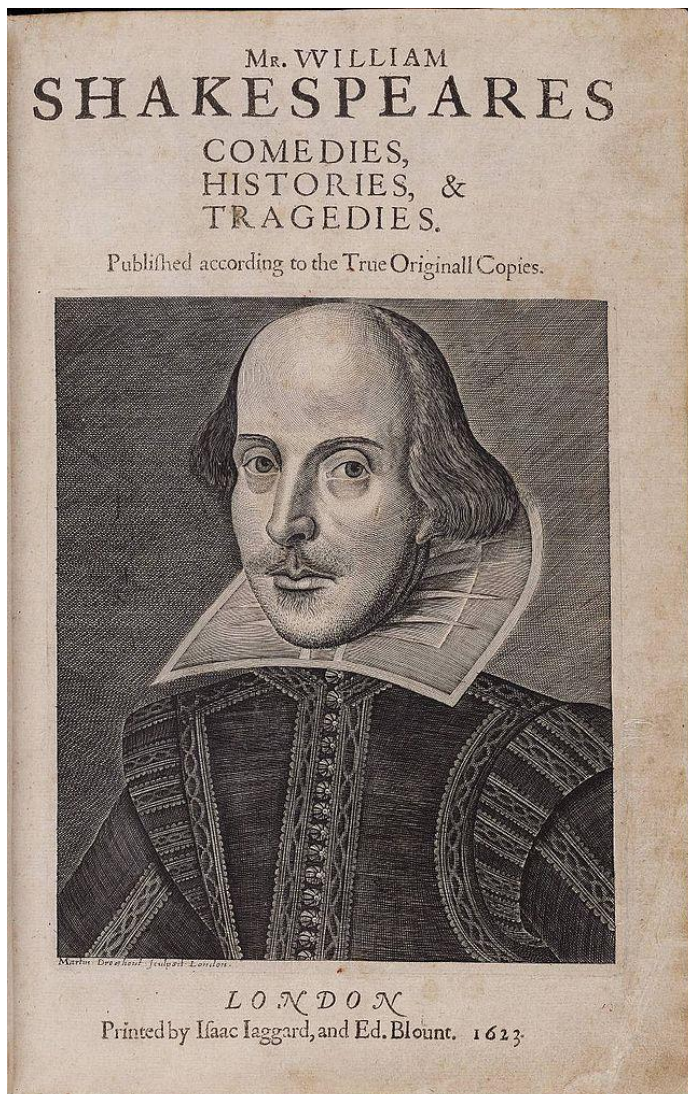
That universality has not diminished in the 400 years since. Shakespeare coined hundreds of words and dozens of phrases we use every day. His plays are performed not only in English-speaking countries but around the world. In America he is consistently the most frequently performed playwright, and there are several companies devoted primarily to his plays. The Internet Movie Data Base lists 935 films based on his works, including 26 released in 2012 alone.

Shakespeare died in 1616 and was buried in Stratford. In 1623, two of his fellow actors and a London printer published a collected edition of his plays. This kind of publication was rare in its

day, as plays were valued for their commercial appeal on the stage, with little thought of them as literature to be preserved. No doubt some of the texts were reconstructed from memory or from a stage manager's promptbook. Nonetheless, this First Folio preserved for posterity some of the greatest writing in the English language, allowing us to study and perform Shakespeare's plays more than 400 years later and for generations to come.

Why do we still pay attention? Shakespeare's characters speak a poetry that is strange to our ears and sends us tripping over outdated vocabulary. But the stories they enact are as fresh as tomorrow's headlines. The ideas in the plays are so powerful that they burst through, despite the presence of a few unfamiliar words. Expend a little effort to really, really listen, and the poetry provides immense rewards. Shakespeare transformed the stuff of life into art, and through his art we see our own lives more clearly than before.

The cover of the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, published in 1623.



Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

by Richard J Roberts,
Dramaturg

In Shakespeare's day, playgoing was enormously popular for all classes of people, and new theatres were springing up across London. None was more popular than Shakespeare's home theatre. The Globe functioned in many

ways as a metaphor for contemporary concepts of society, civilization, and the universe at large. The name of the theatre itself—the Globe—suggested that the events portrayed on its stage were symbolic of events happening in the world. The building's shape, an octagon, suggested the round shape of the world itself.



The Globe was located on the south bank of the River Thames in a disreputable part of London. Built in 1599, the wood-and-plaster building held more than 2,000 spectators, and popular plays often sold out. The public entered through a narrow door located at the base of a small tower. Inside, the building was open to the sky, and performances took place in the afternoon sun.

The audience surrounding the stage was arranged to reflect society at large. Standing on the ground around the stage itself, in the area known as the Pit, were the penny groundlings—those of the lowest classes who paid the least for admittance. Three surrounding levels of balconies rose above them, with correspondingly rising admission prices; Elizabethan society, from top to bottom, was clearly divided and arranged for all to see. Thus an audience member at the Globe could not help but feel his or her place in the world order.

The stage itself jutted out into the center of the yard. On each side of the stage, two tall columns, known as the Pillars of Hercules, were carved and brightly painted. Underneath the roof, the “heavens” were painted sky blue and decorated with starry signs of the Zodiac. Tucked under that ceiling was a small balcony where the theatre’s musicians played “the Music of the Spheres.” At the rear of the stage, on each side, were doors to the backstage area, known as the tiring house, through which the players made their entrances and exits. Between the doors, a brightly painted curtain hid a small alcove, the “discovery” area; above was an often-used balcony.

There was very little scenery. Most of the company's expense went into costumes. Audiences loved noise and spectacle, so the plays had lots of action and violence. Thunder was created by rolling a cannonball across the wooden floor above the stage. Ghosts and other spirits could be raised from below the stage through trap doors or lowered from the "heavens" by a small crane.

At the center of the Globe was the actor. Men played all the parts, since it was against the law for women to act on the stage; young teenage boys played the female roles. The groundlings crowded close to the stage, and the actor-audience relationship was an intimate one.

Shakespeare wrote for an audience who was largely illiterate; most people obtained their news, religious instruction, and entertainment by ear. Without modern stage and lighting effects, location, time, and atmosphere, as well as emotions and ideas, had to be communicated through dialogue.

Shakespeare's plays were very popular, appealing to a wide spectrum of society. Yet his use of language clearly shows that he expected his audience to understand and appreciate puns, paradoxes, and nuances of meaning, complex metaphors, and innovative vocabulary. It may be a bit more challenging in our highly visual age to tune in our ears, but theatregoers of all ages still thrill to Shakespeare's eloquent exploration of the human condition.

Shakespeare's Globe, a recreation of the Globe Theatre built on the site of the original in London.



You and Thee

Shakespeare's use of "thee," "thou," "thy" and "thine" can initially worry students. Those concerns are eased when, through active use, students appreciate that although these old-fashioned pronouns have now dropped out of use in English, they were common in Shakespeare's time alongside "you" and "your." Elizabethans were very sensitive to the different implications of using "you" or "thee," which sent clear social signals. Speakers would switch from one to the other depending on the social context (as is still the practice in other European languages).

In the plays, “thou” can imply either closeness or contempt. It can signal friendship towards an equal or superiority over someone considered a social inferior. Used to address someone of higher social rank, it can be aggressive and insulting. In *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby Belch advises Sir Andrew Aguecheek to use “thou” as an insult.

“You” is a more formal and distant form of address suggesting respect for a superior or courtesy to a social equal. But Shakespeare never stuck rigidly to any rule, and there are always exceptions. What is important is to recognize that when a character switches from one style to the other, it suggests a change of mood or attitude towards the other character.

–from *Teaching Shakespeare: A Handbook for Teachers*
by Rex Gibson (*Cambridge School Shakespeare*)

Wordle from TheatreHistoryProject.Blogspot.Com



Indiana Academic Standards Alignment Guide

Reading – Literature

RL.1 – Read and comprehend a variety of literature independently and proficiently

RL.2 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by analyzing, inferring, and drawing conclusions about literary elements, themes, and central ideas

RL.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature, using knowledge of literary structure and point of view

RL.4 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by connecting various literary works and analyzing how medium and interpretation impact meaning

Sample: 11-12.RL.2.2: Compare and contrast the development of similar themes or central ideas across two or more works of literature and analyze how they emerge and are shaped and refined by specific details.

As Shakespeare's first comedy, *Two Gentlemen* is also the first play to feature misunderstandings regarding characters dressed as the opposite sex. Compare and contrast the device of cross-dressing in *Two Gentlemen* and another Shakespeare comedy (i.e. *Twelfth Night*) and how it affects the dramatic structure and thematic message of the plays.

Reading – Nonfiction

RN.4 – Build understanding of nonfiction texts by evaluating specific claims and synthesizing and connecting ideas (using criticism and review of the play).

Sample: 8.RN.4.1: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Read and critique [this review](#) from a production of *Two Gentlemen* in Washington, D.C. What types of information does the author choose to include, and do you think that information is relevant to the reader? Explain your reasoning, keeping in mind the purpose of a theatre review.

Reading – Vocabulary

RV.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying figurative, connotative, and technical meanings

Sample: 9-10.RV.3.1: Analyze the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in works of literature, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings.

Look at Speed's speech in II.i.17–32. Identify examples of simile and metaphor. How would you describe Valentine, given all that Speed has said about him?

Cross-Curriculum: Fine Arts

H.1.2 PROFICIENT: Identify function in artwork and how it relates to the history, aesthetics, and culture of a work. ADVANCED: Compare works of art for function and identify relationships in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture

View [this image](#) of Silvia from Shakespeare Illustrated. Does the image capture her beauty in a way that is appealing to you? Given the time period of the image, what popular concepts of beauty are reflected? Design your own image of Silvia, using the descriptions of her found in *Two Gentlemen*, but appealing to a modern sensibility of beauty.

Discussion Questions

Before your students see the show:

Discuss with your students the plots of romantic comedies (“rom-coms”) with which they are familiar. These might be books, films, TV programs, etc. Discuss commonalities between the plots. Why are these stories humorous? What elements about some of these plots could turn tragic if they went in another direction?

Guide the students in a discussion about love, lust, infatuation, and friendship. How do we expect people to behave when they claim to care about us or to be attracted to us?

Discuss Shakespeare as not only a playwright, but also a poet. Before reading or seeing *Two Gents*, read some poetry or nursery rhymes aloud with your students. Discuss rhyming, blank verse, free verse, and sonnets. Lead the students in discussing images, rhythm, meaning, point of view, and the voice of the poem. Here are a few links to help your students:

<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/>

<http://www.poets.org/index.php>

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs113/1102258086691/archive/1111119639923.html>

<http://disney.go.com/disneyjunior/a-poem-is>



*Costume rendering
by designer Dorothy Marshall Englis
for Speed in the IRT production of
The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

After your students have seen the show:

What are some contemporary stories in books or media where young people hurt their friends in pursuit of something or someone they desire? How are the issues in these contemporary stories similar to or different from the situations in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*?

Which character in the play did you enjoy the most and why? Think about how the actor used his or her voice and body. How did the actor's interpretation of the role add to your liking the character?

Focus on the role of women in Elizabethan society. What specific aspects of this position are reflected in the play? Comment on how these conditions differ from women's status in our society today. To what extent might these differences make the plot harder to accept by today's standards? How would you work with or around such a challenge to make the play more palatable to today's audience?

How do friendship and romantic love interact in the play? Does one hold precedence over the other? In what way does one overcome the other in the end? Or if they are reconciled, how?

Since long before Shakespeare's time, masculine friendship—male bonding—was held as an ideal of conduct. Friends would do anything to prove their attachment and love for one another; historically this was a long-prevailing social convention. How do you see this convention in light of the play? How strong a function does it have in our contemporary world? How do Proteus and Valentine compare to today's "bromances"?

Why does Valentine forgive Proteus? Why does the Duke pardon Valentine and the Outlaws? Why might Shakespeare have included such widespread forgiveness? Do you believe that this attitude settles everything at the end of the play, or does it leave greater uncertainties? What loose ends are left unaddressed? How do such ambiguities feel appropriate or inappropriate to the story?

After witnessing Proteus's betrayal, why does Julia still follow and accept him? How would you handle such a situation? What would make you believe that Julia can accept Proteus?

Once Silvia has been threatened with rape, she is silent for the rest of the play. Why does she remain so? How do you imagine she feels about Valentine after his offer to forgive Proteus?

Contemporary productions of Shakespeare's plays are often set in different eras. What are some potential pros and cons to setting this play in a time period different from the period in which it was written (the early 1590s)? What might be the pros and cons of setting it today? What did you see as the pros and cons of placing it in the late 1700s, as the IRT production does?

Ask the students to discuss what they learned about the character of Crab from the IRT's production of *Two Gents*. How effective was the dog's presence on stage? Theatres have made numerous choices for plays that have required dogs. Discuss possible alternatives to a real dog on stage: puppet, toy, human actor, invisible dog, mechanical dog, video, other? Have the students debate, experiment, or perform for the class the Launce monologue in Act II, scene 3, using some of these choices.

Do you think that Lucetta's advice to Julia throughout the play was wise and supportive? Why or why not?

Servants who frustrate, disobey, or outwit their masters have enlivened the comedic stage from the time of the Romans to today's TV and films. How does Shakespeare contribute to and expand this tradition? How is the humor provided by Launce and Speed different from what you might see today in a comedy? How is it similar? Discuss the differences and similarities between the relationships Launce and Speed have with their masters.

In soliloquy, Proteus admits he is in love with Silvia and thinks about the consequences of his feelings. He tells us, "O, but I love his lady too too much, / And that's the reason I love him [Valentine] so little." Discuss whether it is more important to follow your heart where it loves or to honor a friend's heartfelt affections.

In the second half of the play, the audience meets some new characters, the Outlaws in the forest of Mantua. How do they and the forest change the tone of the play? How is life in the forest different from life in Milan or Verona?

Playwrights throughout history had their characters speak directly to the audience, both in soliloquy and in asides. With the advent of realism in theatre in the late 1800s, this trend faded from popularity, although it has become more prominent again in recent years. While she is disguised as the page boy, Sebastian, Julia has a number of asides about her true feelings as Julia. How do those asides change if she says them to herself or if she speaks them directly to the audience? How might your response as an audience member be different in these two situations?

In the second half of the play, Julia and Silvia meet each other (although Julia is disguised as Sebastian at the time). Discuss these ladies' personalities and compare their character choices. Could these two ladies be friends? If so, how would their friendship differ from Proteus and Valentine's?

Discuss the importance and symbolism of the rings that are seen throughout the play. In what other Shakespeare plays do jewelry or other tokens of love or loyalty have significance? How are such items viewed by the students among their social peers today? How would they respond if their friends did what the characters in the play do with rings?

Activities

Before seeing *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, review with your students the synopsis of the play and the characters provided in this study guide. More detailed synopses broken down by the acts and scenes of the play are available online or in books such as *Shakespeare A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Plays, His Poems, His Life and Times, and More* by Charles Boyce; and *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare: A Guide to Understanding and Enjoying the Works of Shakespeare* by Isaac Asimov. To take this process a step further, you might have the students read the synopsis aloud in class using their narrator voice; or divide the students into pairs or small groups and give each group a scene of the play to act out for the class in their own words.

Have your students go online and find reviews of productions of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* from across the United States and around the world. Have your students share their findings on the directors' concepts, the productions' designs, casting choices, and critics' opinions. Discuss the various interpretations of the play. How were they similar? What were the different time periods in which the play was set? If your students are reading *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ask them to find text in the play that might have sparked the directors' and designers' production ideas.

Before seeing *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, have the students review comedic literary devices, genres, and comedic style devices. Consider pun, verbal irony, satire, parody, alliteration, slapstick, double entendre, and others. To aid with this research, here are a few weblinks:

<http://quizlet.com/8586210/humor-literary-terms-flash-cards/>

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedic_device

<http://eienglish.org/literms.html>

After seeing the play, talk with the students about which of these comedic devices they remembering hearing and seeing in the production. Or, working in groups, send your students on a scavenger hunt through the text of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and find samples of comedic literary devices.

Review key literary devices and rhetoric with your students: metaphor, simile, personification, repetition, oxymoron, alliteration, hyperbole, lists, onomatopoeia, shared lines, rhymed couplets, antitheses, irony, etc. Send your students on a scavenger hunt through the text of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to find samples of all these literary devices. There are many sites online that provide the entire text. As this is an early play of Shakespeare, before his writing became more complex, these devices are easily spotted and accessible.

Shakespeare's plays are full of music, especially the comedies. After seeing the play, discuss the work of the sound designer and composer, Andrew Hopson. In what ways did his work contribute to the production and the storytelling? After discussing some of themes of the play and the plot with your students, have them create their own musical score for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* by composing or compiling music from whatever time period in which they choose to set the play.

Give each group a scene, a location, a group of characters, or a thematic element to score. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Launce's theme
- Julia and Lucetta
- falling in love with Silvia
- the Outlaws in the forest
- Valentine saying goodbye to best friend Proteus
- the Duke tricking Valentine out of his plan to escape with Silvia
- traveling from home to other cities
- the moment of betrayal

Once the groups have made their choices or composed their original score, put the scenes in order and have the groups play their music. Discuss how the music enhances the scene or characters, and how different music would create a different but still effective mood. Discuss how different groups chose different styles of music and what those different productions would look like.

Often, while reading one Shakespeare play, one recognizes phrases, character types, plot points, and other common factors from other Shakespeare plays. Since so many students study *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*, an interesting activity to do after seeing *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* would be to compare the speeches where the key characters make the major decision that changes the course of the play. What are they struggling against? How do they justify their choices? Look at the imagery in the language and other literary devices. What patterns did Shakespeare make use of?

The text selections are:

- Proteus from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* — Act II, sc.6
- Brutus from *Julius Caesar* — Act II, sc. 1, before the conspirators enter
- Macbeth from *Macbeth* — Act I, sc.3, the aside; Act I, sc.4, the aside; Act I, sc. 7

Humor and vocabulary lost and redefined—Guide the students in a discussion about Shakespeare's comedies and their appeal today. Discuss the humor in *Two Gents* and how the director and actors made the text and production funny to the audience. Talk about how some of the text has a different meaning today than when Shakespeare wrote the play, and how it sometimes takes physical gestures to translate the context to the audience. Ask one of the students be the class scribe and write down the words the class throws out as words and phrases that have joined our vernacular in their lifetime. Ask the students how they would verbally and physically translate these words and phrases to someone from an earlier time. Another fun and interesting thing to do is to look up the words that have been added to the OED in the last year or two:

<http://public.oed.com/whats-new/>

Have the students write a small comic scene using up to ten of these newly entered words.

Have the students write and perform a modern version of Proteus's song in Act 4, Scene 2, "Who Is Silvia?" This can be done live in class or perhaps the students might record their renditions and have their classmates listen to them and write reviews of the different versions.

Hollywood Casting— Give the students a list of the characters from *Two Gents* and have them create a Pinterest board (<https://www.pinterest.com/>) or another form of presentation of famous actors they would want to cast in the roles. This can be done in groups of students or individually. Why did they make their choices? This activity can also be done as a class discussion without photos.

A great activity to do with Shakespeare is paraphrasing into contemporary language. It helps the students with text analysis, vocabulary building, and reading and listening comprehension. Either of the scenes between Julia and Lucetta would be perfect for this exercise. (Act I, scene 2; and Act II, scene 7). Have the students work in pairs or in groups. When completed, it would be interesting for the class to hear aloud different interpretations of the scenes from students who were working in pairs of two girls, two boys, and mixed pairs. Discuss the differences in word and phrasing choices.

Writing Prompts

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus writes a letter to Julia that she tears up. Julia writes a letter to Proteus that he does not let his father see. Silvia hires Valentine to write a letter to the man she loves—Valentine. Have the students choose one of these letters and write his or her own version. Consider everything that is said in the play about the letter to be sure that it fits all the requirements of the plot.

Ask the students to write about where they would want to travel to seek their fortune, advance their reputation, or expand their knowledge and enlightenment about life. What are the advantages this place would give them? What is its history? How would living there mature them? What would they return home with to share with others?

Facebook a character: Create a Facebook page for the lovers and have them post messages and photos to each other as if they are apart in Verona and Milan. Or create a Facebook page for Launce so he can have post for his family to see all that is happening in his life in Milan.

For even more teaching ideas for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* visit these websites:

http://www.guthrietheater.org/sites/default/files/playguide_Verona.pdf

http://www.bard.org/education/studyguides/twogents/verona.html#.U_35oMVdUfY

https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/uploadedFiles/Stratford/Watch_and_Listen/Publications/Study_Guides/The%20Two%20Gentlemen%20of%20Verona%20Study%20Guide.pdf

Resources for the teacher

Books for your general background in Shakespeare:

The Elizabethan World Picture by E. M. W. Tillyard

Evoking Shakespeare by Peter Brook

Shakespeare Our Contemporary by Jan Kott

Shakespeare's Restless World: A Portrait of an Era in Twenty Objects
by Neil MacGregor

Where Queen Elizabeth Slept & What the Butler Saw by David N. Durant

Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare by Stephen Greenblatt

A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599 by James Shapiro

Good reference texts in teaching Shakespeare:

Acting in Shakespeare by Robert Cohen

All the Words on Stage: A Complete Pronunciation Dictionary for the Plays of William Shakespeare by Louis Scheeder & Shane Ann Younts

Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare: A Guide to Understanding and Enjoying the Works of Shakespeare by Isaac Asimov

Brush Up Your Shakespeare! by Michael Macrone

Coined by Shakespeare: Words and Meanings First Penned by the Bard by Stanley Malless, Jeffrey McQuain, & R. O. Blechman

Clues to Acting Shakespeare by Wesley Van Tassel

Discovering Shakespeare's Language (Cambridge School Shakespeare) by Rex Gibson & Janet Field-Pickering

Essential Shakespeare Handbook by Leslie Dunton-Downer & Alan Riding

How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare by Ken Ludwig

Key Shakespeare: English and Drama Activities for Teaching Shakespeare to 14-16 Year Olds, Book 2 by Judith Ackroyd, Jonathan Neelands, Michael Supple, & Jo Trowsdale

Practical Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare (Oxford School Shakespeare) by Peter Reynolds

Shakespeare A to Z by Charles Boyce

Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us by Caroline Spurgeon

Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion by David & Ben Crystal

Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth & Midsummer Night's Dream (The Folger Library) edited by Peggy O'Brien

Stepping into Shakespeare: Practical Ways of Teaching Shakespeare to Younger Learners (Cambridge School Shakespeare) by Rex Gibson

Teaching Shakespeare: A Handbook for Teachers (Cambridge School Shakespeare) by Rex Gibson

Alfred Elmore (1857)
Scene from "The Two Gentlemen of Verona"

Royal Academy of Arts, London

In Act III–Scene 1 of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus betrays his best friend, telling the Duke of Milan that his daughter, Silvia, is planning to run off with Valentine. The Duke says:

"This love of theirs myself have often seen,
Haply when they have judged me fast asleep."

Elmore imagines the scene the Duke describes, a scene we do not actually see onstage.

Recommended Shakespeare Texts:

Arden Shakespeare editions

Folger Shakespeare editions

The Riverside Shakespeare, Second Edition

Oxford and Oxford School Shakespeare editions

Cambridge School Shakespeare editions

DVDs:

Life of Shakespeare (1978) w/ Tim Curry

Playing Shakespeare w/John Barton (1982)

Shakespeare Retold (2007)

BBC Shakespeare Comedies DVD Giftbox

Dead Poets Society (1989)

Me and Orson Welles (2008) w/Zach Efron

Shakespeare Uncovered

A Midwinter's Tale (1995)



Visit these websites:

<http://www.folger.edu>

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com>

<http://www.shakespeare-online.com>

<http://www.bardweb.net/>

<http://www.kn.att.com/wired/fil/pages/listshakespeka2.html>

<http://www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org/education>

<http://www.folger.edu/Content/Teach-and-Learn/Teaching-Resources/Play-by-Play/>

Resources for Students Grades 9-12

Check out these books:

The Friendly Shakespeare: A Thoroughly Painless Guide to the Best of the Bard by Norrie Epstein
Essential Shakespeare Handbook by Leslie Dunton-Downer & Alan Riding
Shakespeare A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Plays, His Poems, His Life and Times, and More by Charles Boyce
Clues to Acting Shakespeare by Wesley Van Tassel
Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion by David & Ben Crystal
Brush Up Your Shakespeare! by Michael Macrone
Coined by Shakespeare: Words and Meanings First Penned by the Bard by Stanley Malless, Jeffrey McQuain, & R. O. Blechman

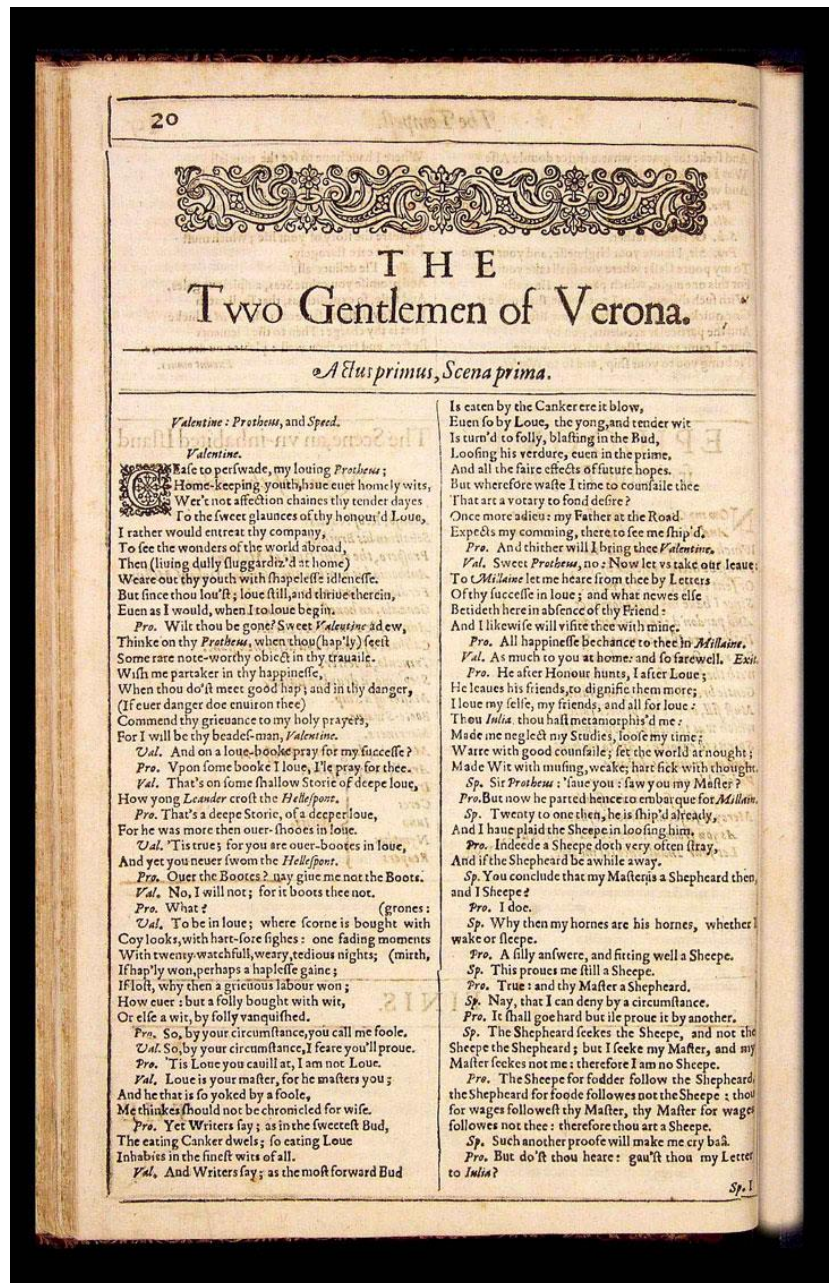
Watch these DVDs:

Shakespeare in Love (1998)
The Standard Deviants—
 Shakespeare series (2004)
Playing Shakespeare w/John Barton
 (1982)
Shakespeare Retold (2007)

Visit these websites:

<http://www.folger.edu>
<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>
<http://www.shakespeare-online.com>
<http://www.bardweb.net/>

The first page of
 The Two Gentlemen of Verona
 from the First Folio
 of Shakespeare's plays,
 published in 1623 by his colleagues
 John Heminges and Henry Condell.



Resources for Students Grades 8-6

Check out these books:

Eyewitness: Shakespeare by Peter Chrisp

The Usborne World of Shakespeare by Anna Claybourne and Rebecca Treays

Brush Up Your Shakespeare! by Michael Macrone

The Shakespeare Stealer by Gary Blackwood

Tales from Shakespeare by Tina Packard

Shakespeare Stories by Leon Garfield

Coined by Shakespeare: Words and Meanings First Penned by the Bard by Stanley Malless, Jeffrey McQuain, & R. O. Blechman

Watch these DVDs:

The Standard Deviants—Shakespeare series (2004)

Shakespeare Retold (2007)

Visit these websites:

<http://www.folger.edu/Content/Teach-and-Learn/Shakespeare-for-Kids/>

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

<http://www.shakespeare-online.com>

<http://www.bardweb.net/>

Resources for Students Grades 5 & Under

Check out these books:

Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare by Peter Vennema & Diane Stanley

Eyewitness: Shakespeare by Peter Chrisp

Shakespeare for Kids: His Life and Times, 21 Activities by Colleen Aagesen & Margie Blumberg

Shakespeare's Stories for Young Readers by E. Nesbit

Coined by Shakespeare: Words and Meanings First Penned by the Bard by Stanley Malless, Jeffrey McQuain, & R. O. Blechman

Tales from Shakespeare (Puffin Classics) by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb with an introduction by Judi Dench

Tales from Shakespeare by Marcia Williams

The Usborne World of Shakespeare by Anna Claybourne & Rebecca Treays

William Shakespeare & the Globe written & illustrated by Alik

Watch this DVD:

Shakespeare: The Animated Tales (2004)

Visit this website:

<http://www.folger.edu/Content/Teach-and-Learn/Shakespeare-for-Kids/>

Going to the Theatre: Audience Role & Responsibility



You, the audience, are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

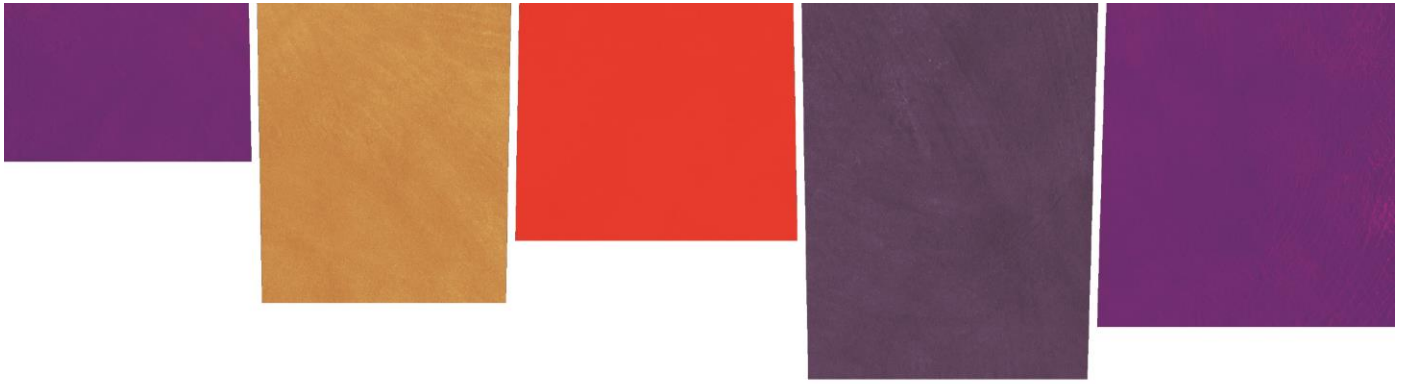
Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.



**Even Shakespeare
had to start somewhere.**



If you're an Indiana student in 6-12 grade, we want to hear from you. Whether you've written a play before or you've never SEEN a play before, we know you have a story to tell.

Maybe it's about you.

Maybe it's about someone you know.

Maybe it's about somewhere that doesn't even exist yet.

But it's there.

And we want to help you bring it to life.

Young Playwrights in Process (YPiP) is an annual playwriting competition for Indiana students in grades 6-12. The competition was created in 2005 through the Margot L. and Robert S. Eccles Trust, and sponsored in collaboration with IRT. YPiP encourages junior high and high school students to create plays for live theatre that reflect and challenge their world. Originally the contest focused on Marion County and the nine contiguous counties, but is now open to the entire state of Indiana.

Scripts will be read by theatre and writing professionals who'll look at your storytelling, dialogue, characters and plot. The judges will choose six Semi-Finalists (three high-school, three junior-high) to attend a weekend workshop where IRT's professional actors will read your play

out loud and you'll work one-on-one with directors and playwrights. This will get you ready to tune up your play and turn it in for Finalist selection. Plus, all Semi-Finalists win \$100 and tickets to IRT!

Two Finalists (one high-school, one-junior high) win a workshop of their play, and a full public, professional reading at the Final Event and Reception. Both Finalists will also win \$1000 and a full scholarship to the IRT Summer Conservatory.

Submission deadline is December 1, 2014.

Learn more about YPiP and how to enter at
www.IRTLIVE.com

