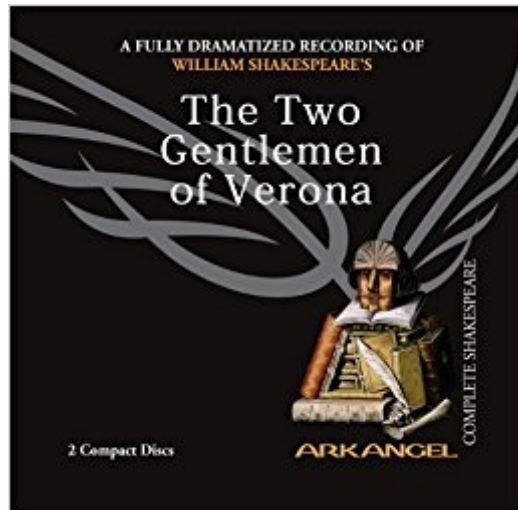




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# The Two Gentlemen Of Verona (Arkangel Shakespeare)



## Synopsis

[Full-Cast Audio Theater Dramatization. Proteus is played by Michael Maloney and Valentine by Damian Lewis. Silvia is Saskia Wickham, Julia is Lucy Robinson, and John Woodvine plays Launce.] This delightful and sometimes disquieting early comedy of love lost and found offers lyrical poetry, disguise, clowning, outlaws, and a most unreliable dog. Proteus loves Julia in Verona, Valentine loves Silvia in Milan. But when Proteus meets Silvia, he falls for her too, and the heartbroken Julia sets out in pursuit.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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Best version. Why? Because it's the closest to Shakespeare. Two Gents was never published in quarto form prior to the First Folio from whence this text comes, except this is cleaned up and in a modern font; none of those 's's that look like 'f's, not cramped into the minimum space possible because paper was hand made and expensive. Later editors would place a high value on consistency, aiming for a product that would be easily digestible by a solitary reader, with correct punctuation, flattening verse into prose where verse pops up unexpectedly. The text of the First Folio, on the other hand, still echos the spoken word, the words of a playwright writing for actors and the stage.

I was drawn to this play after watching *Shakespeare in Love*. Early in the movie lines are recited from the play that are quite entrancing: "What is light, if Silvia be not seen? // What is joy, if Silvia be not by? // Unless it be to think that she is by // And feed upon the shadow of perfection. // Except I be by Silvia in the night, // There is no music in the nightingale; // Unless I look upon Silvia in the day, // There is no day for me to look upon." Alas, these words from Act III, and the song in Act IV, "Who is Silvia? What is she, // That all our swains commend her? // Proteus and Valentine. Proteus loves Julia and she loves him, while Valentine is destined to fall in love with Silvia. This being a comedy, Proteus falls for Silvia too, and Julia must disguise herself as a boy to win him back. If you're

familiar with Shakespeare's comedies, girls disguised as boys is often part of the plot, but it was with this play where cross-dressing began. Valentine goes to Milan to be a tutor and in the world. Soon after, Proteus follows to meet up with him in the court of Milan. There, Proteus forgets about his love for Julia and falls head-over-heels in love with Valentine's girl Silvia, and to entice her affections proceeds to disparage his best friend. Nice guy, huh? This betrayal leads to Valentine's exile from the court. Determined to win him back, Julia dresses as a boy and sets off to find him. The plucky and fetching Julia; the wit of Launce, the clown, and his dog Crab can't save the plot's absurd and implausible twist wherein Valentine offers the love of his life (Silvia) to Proteus, just after Proteus was about to rape her. How's that for friendship? And how's that for love? Valentine doesn't bother to ask Silvia how she feels about being offered up to his friend as so much chattel, never mind that she would have been raped had not Valentine and Julia arrived in the nick of time. As you might expect, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is among the bard's "problem comedies" and is not performed all that often. In the introduction to the Pelican Shakespeare, Mary Beth Rose of the University of Illinois at Chicago sums up the play with: "In the shallow story of deep love (I.I. 21), about which Valentine taunts Proteus at the beginning of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the actual deep love is that between male friends. Indeed. She also cites the plays "exquisite lyricism" as the play's saving grace.

I bought this to read prior to seeing a production of the play. Although I own a one volume complete works, the Pelican books are much easier to read; small, but not too small, easy to carry around if desired. The footnotes are mostly helpful but they are kept to a reasonable number. The several brief prefatory essays (30 pages total) are helpful and interesting, without being tediously scholarly. As to the play itself, it's certainly not one of Shakespeare's best. But the performance we saw made the best of its silliness. Perhaps it's telling that the "character" getting the most laughs was Launce's dog.

The story unfolds pretty quickly and pointlessly. Two friends loyal and true fall in love. When one sees the other's love, the now seemingly instantly psychotic one decides that since he owes his

greatest allegiance to himself, it's a no-brainer that he will do his friend in, betray him and seek the woman he loves for his own. The plot is foiled and all it takes is for him to say "oops sorry about that" and all is forgiven and everyone ends up happily ever after. Some beautiful poetry abounds but the plot seems like Will had a spare weekend with nothing to do.

My twelve year old son has really enjoyed reading all of Shakespeare's plays... thank you.

I read this before attending the play at American Players Theater in Spring Green, WI. It really helped me to enjoy the play and catch all of the language. It is supposed to be Shakespeare's "worst play", but I loved both the book and the performance.

The rating is 100% the best book ever in the whole collections of books that William Shakespeare has written in his past time.

This early Shakespeare play is give a lively treatment by very skillful voice actors and actresses. Nothing to me is lost for the absence of pictures. The choice of smoky jazz for interludes between scenes is a surprising choice, but one gets used to it. All in all, quite satisfying.

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