

the **Two Gentlemen**  
of **Verona** directed by PJ Paparelli

Photos of Natalie Mitchell, Miriam Silverman, Nick Olsberg and Andrew Venstra by Canted Lens Photography



SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY

# FIRST FOLIO:

TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCE GUIDE

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Consistent with the Shakespeare Theatre Company's central mission to be the leading force in producing and preserving the highest quality classic theatre, the Education Department challenges learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern perceptions. We hope that this *First Folio: Teacher and Student Resource Guide* will prove useful to you while preparing to attend *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

*First Folio* provides information and activities to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production. *First Folio* contains material about the playwrights, their world and their works. Also included are approaches to explore the plays and productions in the classroom before and after the performance.

*First Folio* is designed as a resource both for teachers and students. All *Folio* activities meet the "Vocabulary Acquisition and Use" and "Knowledge of Language" requirements for the grades 8-12 Common Core English Language Arts Standards. We encourage you to photocopy these articles and activities and use them as supplemental material to the text.

## Enjoy the show!

The First Folio Teacher and Student Resource Guide for The 2011-2012 Season was developed by the Shakespeare Theatre Company Education Department:

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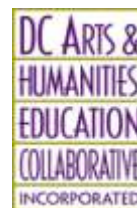
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## Table of Contents

Synopsis	3
Director's Notes	3
Making a Fictional World Look Real	4
Who's Who	6
Shakespeare's Verse & Prose	7
The Significance of the Ring	9
Who Are the Outlaws?	9
Friendship & Love	10
The Trials of Long Distance	11
Code of Honor	12
Post-Performance Discussions	13
That's What She Said	13
Resource List	14
Theatre Etiquette	15

# The Two Gentlemen of Verona Synopsis

Valentine and Proteus, two gentlemen of Verona, are close friends. Contrary to his name, Valentine scorns love and wishes to be 'tutor'd in the world.' Proteus, meanwhile, wishes only to remain in Verona with his sweetheart, Julia. The friends part, Valentine setting off for the court of Milan, accompanied by his pageboy Speed.

In Verona, Julia, overwhelmed by her emotions for Proteus, berates her servant Lucetta for receiving his love letters and then turns the knife on herself for ignoring them. When Antonio, Proteus' father, orders his son to follow Valentine to the Duke's court in Milan, the two young lovers exchange rings and vows of eternal faith. Launce, Proteus' servant, is also forced to leave home, and bids a tearful goodbye to his family before setting sail with his dog, Crab.

In Milan, Valentine arrives and falls instantly in love with Silvia, the daughter of the Duke. Proteus arrives soon after and also forswears his vows—his love for Julia, his friendship for Valentine—by falling for Silvia. Silvia prefers Valentine, but her father supports Thurio, the wealthier suitor. Unaware of Proteus' true feelings, Valentine tells him of his plan to elope with Silvia. The Duke, informed of the plot by Proteus, tricks Valentine into confessing his plan, banishes him from Milan and assigns Proteus the mission of wooing Silvia for Thurio.

Meanwhile, Julia, disguised as a boy, has travelled to Milan to reunite with Proteus. She presents herself to him as Sebastian the page, and Proteus tasks her with wooing Silvia for his sake. The banished Valentine and Speed leave for Mantua, but a highly selective band of Outlaws captures them in the woods and make Valentine their leader. Silvia rejects the amorous Proteus and escapes Milan, with the help of Eglamour, but she is also captured by the Outlaws.

Proteus, pursuing Silvia, fights off the Outlaws and attempts to win her in a frenzy. Shocked at his friend's behavior, Valentine intervenes and a fight ensues. Proteus, suddenly realizing his contemptible actions, begs for forgiveness from Valentine. Valentine, suddenly magnanimous, pardons Proteus and offers his love in Silvia to his friend. Julia, still disguised as Sebastian, has been watching all of these events and faints. Proteus discovers her identity and, repenting his inconstancy, returns to his first love. Valentine sets the captured Duke and Thurio free; Thurio backs off his claim to Silvia and the Duke accepts Valentine as his new son. The Outlaws are pardoned for past sins and all return to Milan.

## Director's Notes



By PJ Paparelli

In 2002, I had the privilege to work on *Romeo and Juliet* at STC. I had just finished working on a new play about Columbine High School, a project I had been immersed in for many years. *columbinus* was about the shooting in 1999, but it was also about adolescents and their relationships. It was a wonderful theater experiment, to have these two works bleed into each other. The most important thing I learned was that they were strikingly similar. Teenagers then were very much like teenagers are now.

And now, I have come back to STC and back to a play about very similar things. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is immensely concerned with the transformative power of love, in good ways and bad ways. It's also immensely concerned with young people, wealthy young people (they are "gentlemen," after all), young people who are ignored by adults and left to their teenage caprices. One thing I learned years ago is that teenagers always assume they hold the reigns in their lives. It comes as a sudden and devastating shock when they discover they are powerless, powerless to control another person's actions, powerless to make someone love them. The characters make tremendous choices in this play. And there are no adults around to guide them. You may think that sounds like *Romeo and Juliet* – and it does.

And yet, this play isn't, like *Romeo and Juliet*, a tragedy. It's unbelievably funny, and it has one of Shakespeare's most famous comic monologues in it. Launce's love for his dog, unparalleled in its comedic possibility, is yet another acute study of human behavior. As some of you may know, the relationship between pets and their owners can be mini-dramas played out in real life.

*Continued on page 4*

## Director's Notes (cont.)

Shakespeare, who observes the intensity of the friendship shared by Proteus and Valentine, is doing the same thing here. We see Launce, madly in love with his mangy mutt Crab, immersed in his wandering, whimsical, one-sided conversations. Love makes everyone in this play do crazy things.

Shakespeare's language expresses all the broiling emotions and driving passions in this play, and so I wanted to live in that world as fully as possible. However, I couldn't help but seeing *today* in this play. *Two Gentlemen* reminds me of wealthy suburban life, where parents are wrapped up in their worries about the crashing economy and teenagers are left to their own devices. Our challenge is to allow the play to exist in its period while also releasing the energy and the echoes of today's world.

We have created a hybrid world that is complex, but ultimately timeless. The flavor of the costumes is Elizabethan, as are the class structures. There are servants and masters, rapiers and farthingales. But at the same time, product placement suggests the world that consumes modern teenagers, from McDonald's to Trojan condoms to Apple. The images that you'll see in the Lansburgh Theatre are fragments of the world we live in: busted up, dangerous, energetic. I want to have the teenagers of today – their recklessness, their abandon, their passions, their fun – echoing through the design and Shakespeare's words. I am madly in love with this play, and I would love to find a way to celebrate Shakespeare's incredibly modern and observant feel for the passions and desires of the young.

## Next Steps

Common Core Standards: Inference, Analysis and Evaluation

- Why are Shakespeare's plays often set in different time periods, locations, etc.? What do you think is gained by changing the setting? What is lost?
- Before seeing our production, how do you think this contemporary setting will illuminate in the play? And what could potentially be lost?
- What do you think would happen if adult supervision no longer existed? Do you think you would make the same choices?

## Making a Fictional World Look Real

The characters and events depicted in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* exist in a fictional world. So what are the tricks that directors, designers and actors use to make the world of the play look so real? Actor *Nick Dillenburg* talks about stage combat safety and Lead Props Artisan *Chris Young* talks about the process of creating weapons for the stage.

**Nick Dillenburg:** The most important thing to keep in mind when staging a fight is safety. To that end, I always try to think of it as a "technical exercise." It's easy to get carried away and think of it as a fight and have your own instincts and defense mechanisms kick in, but that's when things can get dangerous. The first couple weeks through the fight it's never really necessary to run it at real speed. We practice it slowly and with great attention to detail so that it gets "in our bodies." Then it's simply a matter of saying to yourself, "I'm not aiming for his nose (my real target), but rather the space above his shoulder. And because my back is to the audience, I never have the need to get closer than one to two feet from his face." We're constantly making eye contact with one another so that we know when kicks and punches are about to arrive, and so we're always on the same page. Then, eventually, you start to bring it up to speed.

Surprisingly, however, the speed at which it translates to an audience is usually slower than how it would really happen. After all, it always comes back to storytelling.

*Continued on page 5*

## Making a Fictional World Look Real (cont.)

**Chris Young:** Blood knives need to be safe for the actor, robust enough to last the length of the production, reliable, and easy to clean and reset for the crew. For *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* we're matching a #2 X-ACTO knife. The medicine dropper will be the reservoir.

The blade will be sanded smooth and a layer of packing tape will be applied to it. The blade will still be thin after being dulled, so it will feel sharp. A slot will also be cut down the middle of the blade for the blood to flow through. The screw head that holds the knife blade will have a 1/16" hole drilled through it to allow blood to get to the blade.

The knife body will be drilled out and shortened. It will fit snugly inside on the medicine dropper. Only the bulb and about an inch of the dropper body will be kept for the rig. The blue plastic will be covered with dark nylon hose. It will be sized to fit in the actresses hand so no one can see the bulb.

A manufactured stage blood, "Reel Blood" is used for the base of all of the effects. The thickness of the blood will be consistent enough so that the actress will be able to "write" in blood on her arm.

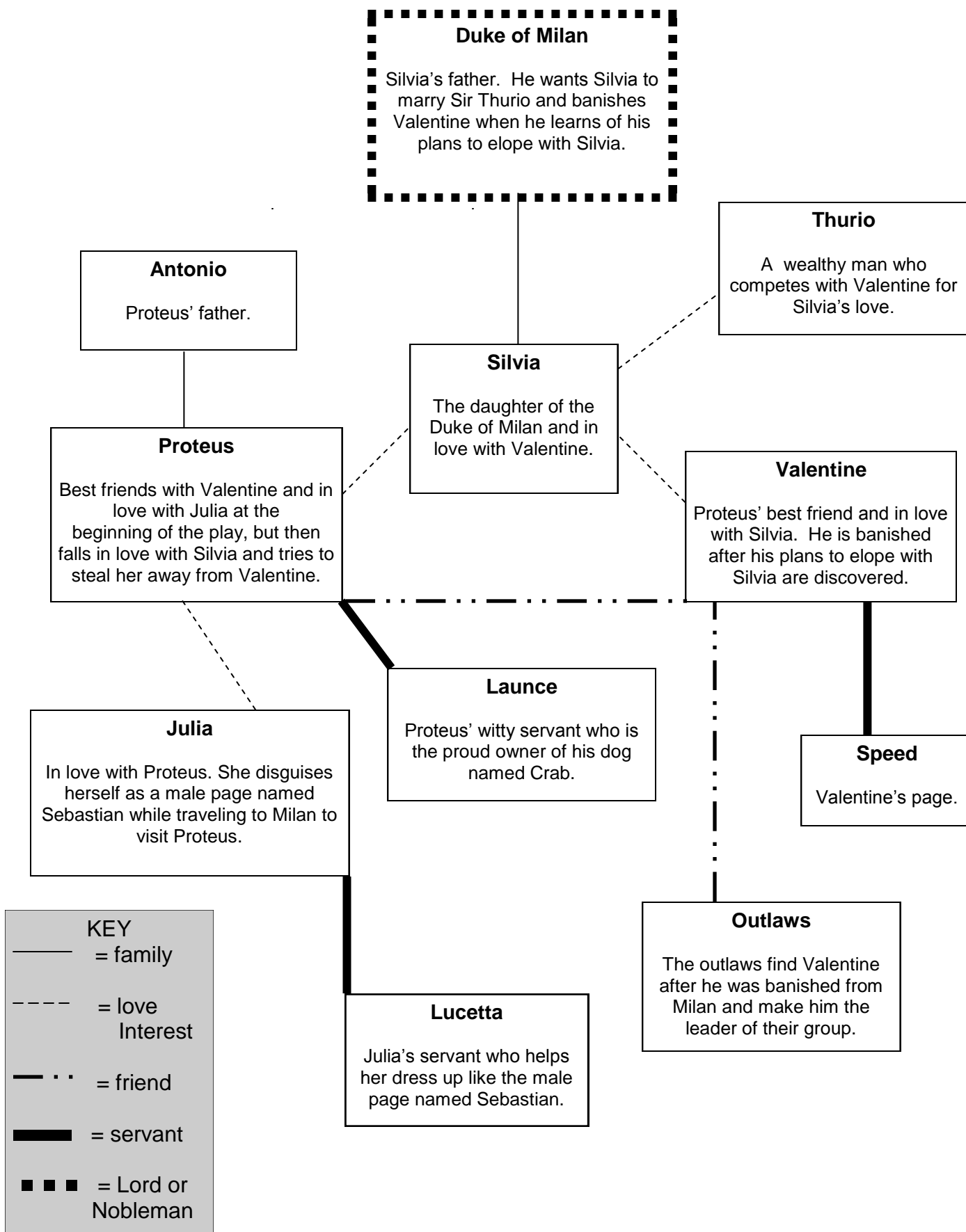


Materials used to make the blood knife in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.



Actual knife to be used in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

# WHO'S WHO in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*



# Shakespeare's Verse & Prose



During the Elizabethan period, “English” was a relatively young language (only about 160 years old) combining Latin, French and Anglo-Saxon. There was no dictionary or standardized literacy education. People in Shakespeare’s London spoke much more than

they read, causing the rules of grammar and spelling to be quite fluid. Writers created new words daily and poets expressed themselves in a new form of writing known as **blank verse**, first appearing in 1557 in *Certain Bokes of Virgiles Aenis* by the Earl of Surrey:

They whistled all, with fixed face attent  
When Prince Aeneas from the royal seat  
Thus gan to speak, O Queene, it is thy will,  
I should renew a woe can not be told:  
(Book II, 1-4)

That the verse was “blank” simply meant that the poetry did not rhyme, allowing rhyme-less poets such as Virgil and Ovid to be translated and Elizabethan playwrights to emulate the natural rhythms of English speech within **iambic pentameter**.

A typical line of verse from this time contains five units of meter or **feet**. Each foot contains two syllables. When the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed (dee DUM), it is an **iamb** (iambic meaning push, persistency or determination). The prefix **penta** means five, as in the five-sided shape—a pentagon. Iambic pentameter is therefore one line of poetry consisting of five forward-moving feet.

It was this new tradition of blank verse in iambic pentameter that Shakespeare inherited as he embarked on his career as playwright and creator of the greatest poetry in the history of the English language. Similar to the human heartbeat, a horse gallop or the beat of a piece of music, iambic pentameter drives and supports Shakespeare’s verse, moving the language along in a forward flow that emulates the natural speech and rhythms of life. Here is a standard line of verse in iambic pentameter from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

I think him so because I think him so.  
(act 1, scene 2, line 26)

If we were to say the rhythm and not the words, it would sound like this:

dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM

When we **scan** a piece of text (marking it with a “ $\cup$ ” for the unstressed and “/” for stressed), we simply tap out the rhythm of the line, based on dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM, to see if the line is structured in iambic pentameter:

$\cup$  /  $\cup$  /  $\cup$  /  $\cup$  /  $\cup$  /  
I think him so because I think him so.  
(act 1, scene 2, line 26)

**Prose** in Shakespeare’s work is not in iambic pentameter and relies more heavily on other literary devices for its speed and rhythm. These devices include: **antithesis** (setting opposite words against each other), **lists** (series of actions or descriptive words that build to a climax) and **puns** (the use or misuse of a word to mean another word).

Shakespeare used prose to express conversation between the lower classes, like the Mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, or familiar or intimate scenes, as with Henry and Katherine at the end of *Henry V*. He also utilized prose to express madness or vulgarity, as in the nunnery scene of *Hamlet*. The exact meaning of a shift from verse to prose is not constant, but it always signals a change in the situation, characters or tone of a scene. Only *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* rely almost entirely on prose.

In the following passage from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Launce speaks in prose.

Lose the tide, and the voyage, and the  
master, and the service and the tied! Why,  
man, if the river were dry, I am able to fill it  
with my tears; if the wind were down, I could  
drive the boat with my signs.  
(act 2, scene 4, line 50)

As his writing skill level increased, Shakespeare gradually employed **alliteration** (the repetition of a vowel or consonant in two or more words in a phrase), **assonance** (resembling vowel sounds in a line) and **onomatopoeia** (words with sounds imitating their meaning) to create deeply poetic, vibrant images on stage for the characters and his audience.

# Classroom Activities

Common Core Standards: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use, Knowledge of Language, Understanding of Classical Literature, Questioning and Listening, Analysis and Evaluation

## Tackling the Text

- Do a close reading of a four-or-five-line passage from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Read the lines aloud and paraphrase them, identifying any unknown words. Next, identify the operative words in the passage. Using the operative words as a starting point (hint: operatives are always stressed), scan the lines, using the symbol “U” for unstressed and “/” for stressed, and determine the meter.
- The Duke in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* speaks in prose. Why would royalty speak in prose?
- Shakespeare used a shift in language as clues to his audience and actors that something was happening. Do we adjust our language today based on who is in the room, how we are feeling or who we are talking to? Write down an example of why a person might shift from verse to prose and prose to verse in 2012.

## Strategies for Close Reading

When exploring text, it is also helpful to understand paraphrasing and operative words.

- **Paraphrasing** is a good way of making the text more accessible by putting it in your own words.
- **Operative words** are the words that are essential to telling the story. They are the most important words in a line of Shakespeare’s text. Operative words are generally in this order of importance: verbs, nouns (including title and names the first time they are mentioned), adjectives and adverbs.

## I Can Do That! Modernizing a Piece of Classical Text

See if you can modernize the language in this excerpt from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* without changing the main ideas that the characters are discussing. Examine the excerpt line by line and update each line of text on its own. Feel free to look up any words or phrases that you are not familiar with. This activity gives you the opportunity to closely examine a classical text and recognize how the ideas contained in it are timeless.

*Valentine*

And why not death rather than living torment?  
To die is to be banished from myself;  
And Silvia is myself: banished from her  
Is self from self: a deadly banishment!  
What light is light, if Silvia be not seen?  
What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by?  
Unless it be to think that she is by,  
And feed upon the shadow of perfection.  
(act 3, scene 1, lines 175-182)

To take it one step further: write your updated version in verse.



# A Look Inside *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*



Julia Dion as Julia in STC's 2001 production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

## The Significance of the Ring

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus commands Sebastian (Julia, in disguise) to present Silvia with a ring as a testament of his love for her – the very ring that Julia had given to Proteus as a reminder of their love!

The giving and receiving of rings dates back to the dawn of man. While cavemen didn't use rings, they did tie knots of grass around their beloved's arms, wrists, ankles and waists to indicate the union of two spirits. Ancient Egyptians also used plants and reeds (such as papyrus and hemp) to fashion their rings which they believed, like many other ancient civilizations, to represent eternity as rings are circles with no beginning or end. They were worn on the third finger of the left hand (fourth if you count the thumb), as they are today – the guiding belief being that the vein running from this finger led straight to the heart (*vena amoris* or "vein of love"). Gems, jewels and precious metals did not come into play until much later and even then, it had less to do with one's emotional attachment and more to do with one's status.

The Greeks and Romans adopted the ring tradition with some new cultural and practical "advances." The rings were now shaped out of metals such as bronze and copper instead of reeds and grasses. And no longer were they merely expressions of love, but also signified "ownership." A woman who accepted and wore the ring of a suitor signified to all other rival suitors that she was "taken." But these rings also symbolized the woman's shared ownership of her husband's wealth and property, which was indicated by its design in the shape of a key (though more romantic types want to believe that it symbolizes the "key to one's heart").

During Shakespeare's time, the giving and receiving of posy rings were quite popular. Usually made of silver, these rings carried inscriptions with sentiments of hope and faith – a tradition widely practiced today. Eventually, gold became the standard metal to craft wedding rings out of while silver was reserved for engagement rings.

## Next Steps

Common Core Standards: Inference, Analysis and Evaluation

- In what other Shakespearean plays are rings an important symbol?
- Why in modern times is it common for men not to have engagement rings?

## Who Are the Outlaws?

After Valentine is banished from the Duke of Milan's court he flees to the forest, where he comes across a merry band of outlaws. After an unsuccessful robbery attempt (Valentine assured the men he had nothing to give but the clothes on his back), Valentine impresses the bandits by claiming that he once killed a man. With this fact, in addition to his banishment from Milan and his skills as a "linguist", Valentine manages to thoroughly impress the bandits and they decide to elect him as "commander and their king." With a bit of persuasion, Valentine humbly accepts his title and becomes their leader, under the condition that they "do no outrages on silly women or poor passengers." The men, goofily honorable despite their former crimes, assure him that they "detest such vile base practices."

It is likely that Shakespeare has borrowed from the popular literary character Robin Hood, the champion of the poor who has been captured in songs, plays and proverbs for hundreds of years (It can be certain that

*Continued on page 10*

# A Look Inside *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

## Who Are the Outlaws? (cont.)

Shakespeare was familiar with Robin Hood and his merry men, as there is a reference to the character by the exiled duke in *As You Like It*). Like Valentine and the bandits, Robin Hood and his men are also inhabitants of a forest, and represent, in various forms, a resistance to authority.

Characters like Robin Hood and Valentine are considered social bandits; they are gentlemen thrown into their role by circumstance, and they adhere to a gentleman's code. Valentine's rule to do no outrages against women or defenseless travelers appears on par with Robin Hood's infamous "Steal from the rich, give to the poor" ideology. While they remain a symbol of resistance to an imposed and oppressive authority in the forest, they are quick to give up their bandit lifestyle when given the opportunity. When pardoned by the Duke of Milan at the end of *Two Gents*, Valentine and the bandits enthusiastically agree to return to Milan.

## Next Steps

Common Core Standards: Inference, Analysis and Evaluation

- In what other Shakespeare plays are there groups of people who take in or welcome those who are banished?
- Using the outlaws in *Two Gentlemen* and the other examples from Shakespeare plays, answer the following questions: (1) Why do you think Shakespeare included these characters in the plays? (2) How do they help tell the story?

## Friendship & Love

When introduced to Proteus and Valentine, we meet them as the best of friends. But that soon changes when Silvia comes into the picture. Proteus falls for Valentine's beloved and wastes little time in worrying about his friend's feelings (or those of his girlfriend back home).

In the course of one soliloquy (act 2, scene 2), Proteus not only justifies his love for Valentine's girl, Silvia, but also announces his intentions to throw his old friend "under the bus" to obtain the object of his affection. If there was any pause, it was short-lived and easily dismissed:

*To love fair Silvia, shall I be forsworn;  
To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn;  
And even that power which gave me first my oath  
Provokes me to this threefold perjury;  
Love bade me swear and Love bids me forswear.*

- Is this not a gross violation of "guy code"? Or is all truly fair in love as it is in war?

It would certainly seem so to Valentine who, when all is said and done, remains the most loyal of friends. Not only does Valentine bear no grudge against Proteus for his treachery, but he also offers up Silvia to preserve their friendship. In Valentine's case, loyalty to his male friend supersedes any vows made to Silvia.

- Surely Valentine's loyalty towards Proteus insults our modern sensibilities, right? Or does it...?



Donald Corren as Speed, Floyd King as Launce and Sydney as Crab in STC's 2001 production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

*Continued on page 11*

# A Look Inside *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

## Friendship & Love (cont.)

Valentine's love for Proteus trumping that of his love for Silvia would not have seemed that strange to an Elizabethan audience. As evidenced in writings from ancient Palestine, Greece and Rome, male friendships were seen as nobler than marital bonds. Greek and Roman myth further support this notion as heterosexual love frequently led to danger while male friendship was celebrated as the source of strength and inspired heroic deeds as seen in Achilles' relationship with Patroclus versus his devotion to Briseis.

Even in contemporary literature, one still sees the celebration of male friendship and its dominance over any heterosexual relationship (Ishmael and Queequeg in Melville's *Moby Dick*, George and Lennie in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Sal and Dean in Kerouac's *On the Road*). Outside of literature, one can look at the relationships amongst the cast members of MTV's *Jersey Shore* in which the males always remain loyal to one another and demonstrate "guy code", regardless of how the females are affected by their actions.

Are these beliefs truly a thing of the past or do we still put friends before significant others?

## Classroom Activity

Common Core Standards: Inference, Persuasive Writing, Analysis and Evaluation

### The Trials of Long Distance

At the very beginning of the play Proteus is very much in love with Julia, saying "He after honor hunts, I after love . . . . He leaves his friends to dignify them more:/I leave myself, my friends, and all, for love" (act 1, scene 1, 66-68). By the end of the play, he has dismissed Julia and has become infatuated with Silvia, even threatening "I'll force thee yield to my desire" (act 5, scene 4, line 64).

Although his actions are not excusable, the issue of distance might have contributed to his change of heart. By 21st century standards, the distance between Verona and Milan is 100 miles, less than the distance from Washington, DC, to Philadelphia, PA. Today we have technological tools at our disposal to help bridge long distances, but back then being separated by more than a few miles meant it could take months to communicate. Being in any long distance relationship has its challenges; imagine how much more difficult it would be when there is no opportunity to immediately contact your loved one.

1. Below is a list of ways to communicate with people. Rank them by your personal communication preference: Call, text, email, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, IM, letters, postcards, in person.
2. Imagine you only had access to the forms of communication available at the time Shakespeare was writing *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in the 1600s. How would this affect your communication with your friends and family? Would you keep in contact with the same people as you do now? Would you communicate the same information?
3. Given the difficulties of long-distance communication in the 1600s, how do you think audiences reacted to Proteus' behavior at the time?
4. Given that our production uses modern forms of communication, how does that affect your reaction to Proteus' behavior?

# A Look Inside *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

## Classroom Activity

Common Core Standards: Argument and persuasive writing, Listening, Performance

### Code of Honor

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* follows the friendship of Valentine and Proteus. At times they appear to be the best of friends with undying loyalty and yet there are some cracks in their friendship. Looking at their relationship brings forward questions about the role we play in our friend's lives. Is there an unofficial honor code that we should follow?

The actor playing Proteus shares reflections on how the play rings true with his memories of teenage friendships:

"I can easily identify with Proteus' situation. He's in love for the first time and has the misfortune of having these feelings before his good friend. The general sentiment among the guys I played football with in high school was 'bros before hoes.' And as coarse as that sounds, I was always so concerned with what other people thought that it affected me.

In the play, Valentine is giving Proteus a hard time for having fallen in love with Julia, and the main way these guys express themselves to each other is through sarcasm and insult. They rarely channel their feelings directly, for fear of insult. And then Proteus fears even to tell his father, which doesn't turn out well either. Left to his own thoughts Proteus wants to punch a wall. I can remember a couple of times when I actually did!

Those were some of the best and worst times of my life, coming upon these emotions and situations for the first time. Falling in love, having a best friend, feeling on top of the world because your football team was going to the state tournament. I felt untouchable until proven otherwise. I can also remember the fallout when my best friend suddenly had a girlfriend with whom he spent all his time and I was left out in the cold, feeling forgotten. It may seem a little dramatic, but back then that was my whole world."

#### Discussion Questions

- What are the dos and don'ts in friendship? If push came to shove, whom should you be more loyal to – your best friend who you've known since kindergarten or your new boy/girlfriend whom you only recently started dating?
- What are the rules governing interaction between your best friend and your significant other? What happens if you fall in love with your friend's significant other?

**Individual Activity:** Brainstorm a list of statements beginning with "I pledge to..." that defines the ideal conduct of a friend. Write these down and share and discuss with your classmate why you believe these traits are important.

**Group Activity Option:** Ask four volunteers (of same or different gender) to seat themselves in a row in front of the class. Ask each person to take turns making "I pledge" statements. Each statement should be presented as a vow that one would adhere to in friendship (for example, "I pledge to always tell the truth to my best friend"). Circumvent any anxiety by encouraging them to be honest and spontaneous and asking the rest of the class to withhold any vocal judgment during the activity. Each participant should make one "I pledge" statement and then the next person in line will make an original "I pledge" statement.

This process repeats for several rotations so that each participant has offered different statements. Follow this activity with a group discussion: what did you agree/disagree with? What informed each statement? Were some in response to others?

# A Look Inside *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

## Classroom Activities

Common Core Standards: Inference, Persuasive Writing, Analysis and Evaluation

### Post-Performance Discussion Questions



Costume rendering by Paul Spadone.

After seeing our production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and re-reading director, PJ Paparelli's notes (found on page 3), answer the following questions.

- Was our production an accurate depiction of young people's lives?
- Did you see any stereotypes of young people? If so, what were they and why were they stereotypes?
- Should adults stop trying to portray young people's lives?
- Some of the characters are dealing with difficult situations and problems. Do you think that they dealt with them correctly? What advice would you give to them?
- What do you think was illuminated in the play with this setting? What was lost?

### That's What She Said

In the final scene of *Two Gents*, act 5, scene 4, Proteus forces himself on Silvia, Valentine catches him, forgives him and Proteus agrees to marry Julia. It is because of this final scene that many people consider *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to be a "problem play." Not only are the women passed around like objects, but neither of them speak in the last two pages— their fate is decided for them by the men. Four hundred years ago, Julia and Silvia might not have felt comfortable speaking up for themselves, but if this same scene played itself out in 2012, it would most likely end very differently.

Picture yourself in Julia or Silvia's shoes, watching these two men decide your fate. What would you say to them? What actions would you have taken? Would Julia still forgive Proteus? Would Silvia be angry at Valentine when he gave her away to Proteus? Write lines for Julia and Silvia to add into this scene.

After each person has written their additional lines, split up into groups and assign each person a character and add in your lines for Sylvia and Julia. How do these lines affect the ending of the play?



Costume rendering by Paul Spadone.

# Resource List

## Shakespeare Dictionaries

- Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*. Dover, 1971.
- Onion, C.T. *A Shakespeare Glossary*. Oxford University Press, 1986.

## Books on Shakespeare

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## Websites

- **Shakespeare Theatre Company**—<http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/education>  
ON SHAKESPEARE: Articles and information about Shakespeare's life and world
- **In Search of Shakespeare: Shakespeare in the Classroom**—<http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/>  
The companion website to Michael Wood's four-part PBS series *In Search of Shakespeare*, this site includes extensive research about Shakespeare's life and works, as well as interactive features.
- **Folger Shakespeare Library**—<http://www.folger.edu>  
Includes excellent resources for further reading about Shakespeare, as well as fun games and information designed specifically for students and teachers.

# Standards of Learning

The activities and question sequences found in the Folio supports grade 8-12 Common Core standards in English Language Arts. Primary content areas addressed include but are not limited to:

- Understanding of Classical Literature
- Vocabulary and Content Development
- Stagecraft
- Argument and Persuasive Writing
- Inference
- Performance
- Questioning and Listening
- Research
- Analysis and Evaluation

# Theatre Etiquette

The phrase “**theatre etiquette**” refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below:



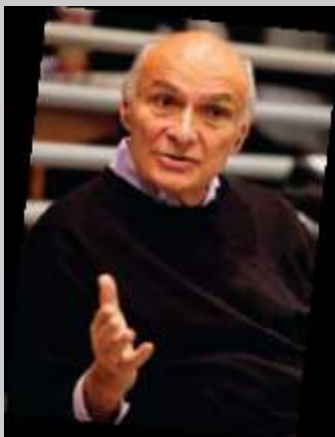
*Students at a SHAKESPEARIENCE production of Cymbeline.  
Photo by Nicole Geldart.*

## Before you go:

- Please remember to turn off all electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.). It can be very distracting, not to mention embarrassing, when a cell phone goes off during a performance. The lights from cell phones and other electronic devices are also a big distraction, so please no text messaging.
- We’re sure that you would never stick your gum underneath your chair or spill food and drinks, but because this theatre is so new and beautiful, we ask that you spit out your gum before entering the theatre and leave all food and drinks in the lobby or the coat check.
- We don’t want you to miss out on any of the action of the play, so please visit the restroom before the performance begins.

## During the performance:

- Please feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening on stage. You can laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don’t talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions for intermission and after the performance.



## Thoughts about the importance of being an audience member from Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn

“When you go to the theatre, you are engaging with other living, breathing human beings, having an immediate human response. In the theatre you sense that all of this may never happen again in this particular way.

As a member of the audience, you are actually part of how that’s developing—you have a hand in it ... You are part of a community where you are asked to be compassionate, perhaps to laugh with or grieve as well as to understand people, lives and cultures different from your own.”