

*(Enter Proteus, Sylvia, and Julia, disguised as Sebastian.)*

PROTEUS

Madam, this service I have done for you—  
Though you respect not aught your servant doth—  
To hazard life, and rescue you from these men  
That would have forced your honor and your love.  
Vouchsafe me for my reward but one fair look;  
A smaller boon than this I cannot beg,  
And less than this I am sure you cannot give.

VALENTINE *(aside)*

How like a dream is this I see and hear!  
Love, lend me patience to forbear awhile.

SYLVIA

O miserable, unhappy that I am!

PROTEUS

Unhappy were you, madam, ere I came,  
But by my coming, I have made you happy.

SYLVIA

By thy approach thou mak'st me most unhappy.

JULIA *(aside)*

And me, when he approacheth to your presence.

SYLVIA

Had I been seizèd by a hungry lion,  
I would have been a breakfast to the beast  
Rather than have false Proteus rescue me.  
O heaven, be judge how I love Valentine,  
Whose life's as tender to me as my soul;  
And full as much, for more there cannot be,  
I do detest false perjured Proteus.  
Therefore begone; solicit me no more.

PROTEUS

What dangerous action, stood it next to death,  
Would I not undergo for one calm look!  
O, 'tis the curse in love, and still approved,  
When women cannot love where they're beloved.

SYLVIA

When Proteus cannot love where he's beloved.  
Read over Julia's heart, thy first best love,  
For whose dear sake thou didst then rend thy faith  
Into a thousand oaths; and all those oaths  
Descended into perjury to love me.

Thou hast no faith left now,  
Thou counterfeit to thy true friend!

PROTEUS

In love, who respects friend?

SYLVIA

All men but Proteus.

PROTEUS

Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words  
Can no way change you to a milder form,  
I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end,

*(He moves slowly toward Sylvia)*

SYLVIA *(she shrinks back)*

O, heaven!

VALENTINE *(rushes in with sword to save Sylvia)*

Ruffian, come not near her that I love,  
Thou friend of an ill fashion.

*(They fight with swords; Valentine in a rage defeats him and puts his sword point at his throat.)*

PROTEUS Valentine!

VALENTINE

Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,  
For such is a friend now. Treacherous man,  
Thou hast beguiled my hopes; nought but mine eye  
Could have persuaded me. Now I dare not say  
I have one friend alive; thou wouldst disprove me.  
Who should be trusted when one's right hand  
Is perjured to the bosom? Proteus,  
I am sorry I must never trust thee more,  
But count the world a stranger for thy sake.  
The private wound is deepest.  
O, time most accursed,  
'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst!

PROTEUS *(falls to his knees)*

My shame and guilt confounds me.  
Forgive me, Valentine. If hearty sorrow  
Be a sufficient ransom for offense,  
I tender 't here. I do as truly suffer  
As e'er I did commit.