

Scene 6

(Enter Proteus alone)

PROTEUS

To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn.
To love fair Sylvia, shall I be forsworn.
To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn.
And ev'n that power which gave me first my oath
Provokes me to this threefold perjury.
Love bade me swear, and love bids me forswear.
O sweet-suggesting Love, if thou hast sinned,
Teach me, thy tempted subject, to excuse it.
At first I did adore a twinkling star,
But now I worship a celestial sun;
Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken,
And he wants wit that wants resolve
To exchange the bad for better.
Fie, fie, unreverend tongue, to call her bad
Whose sovereignty so oft thou hast preferred
With twenty thousand soul-confirming oaths.
I cannot cease to love, and yet I do.
Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose;
If I keep them, I needs must lose myself;
I to myself am dearer than a friend,
For love is still most precious in itself.
I will forget that Julia is alive,
Rememb'ring that my love to her is dead.
And Valentine I'll hold an enemy,
Aiming at Sylvia as a sweeter friend.
I cannot now prove constant to myself
Without some treachery used to Valentine.
This night he meaneth with a corded ladder
To climb celestial Sylvia's chamber window,
Myself in counsel his competitor.
Now presently I'll give her father notice
Of their disguising and pretended flight,
Who, all enraged, will banish Valentine,
For Thurio he intends shall wed his daughter.
But Valentine being gone, I'll quickly cross
By some sly trick blunt Thurio's dull proceeding.
Love, lend me wings to make my purpose swift,
As thou hast lent me wit to plot this drift.
(He exits.)