

## SIDE 17: Duke and Valentine

### Act 3, scene 1

(Enter Valentine)

#### DUKE

Sir Valentine, whither away so fast?

#### VALENTINE

Please it your Grace, there is a messenger  
That stays to bear my letters to my friends,  
And I am going to deliver them.

#### DUKE

Be they of much import?

#### VALENTINE

The tenor of them doth but signify  
My health and happiness being at your court.

#### DUKE

Nay then, no matter. Stay with me awhile;  
I am to break with thee of some affairs  
That touch me near, wherein thou must be secret.  
'Tis not unknown to thee that I have sought  
To match my friend Sir Thurio to my daughter.

#### VALENTINE

I know it well, my lord, and sure the match  
Were rich and honorable. Besides, the gentleman  
Is full of virtue, bounty, worth, and qualities  
Beseeming such a wife as your fair daughter.  
Cannot your Grace win her to fancy him?

#### DUKE

No. Trust me, she is peevish, sullen, froward,  
Proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty,  
Neither regarding that she is my child  
Nor fearing me as if I were her father;  
And may I say to thee, this pride of hers,  
Upon advice, hath drawn my love from her,  
And where I thought the remnant of mine age  
Should have been cherished by her childlike duty,  
I now am full resolved to take a wife  
And turn her out to who will take her in.  
Then let her beauty be her wedding dower,  
For me and my possessions she esteems not.

**VALENTINE**

What would your Grace have me to do in this?

**DUKE**

There is a lady in Verona here  
Whom I affect; but she is nice, and coy,  
And nought esteems my agèd eloquence.  
Now therefore would I have thee to my tutor—  
For long ago I have forgot to court;  
Besides, the fashion of the time is changed—  
How and which way I may bestow myself  
To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.

**VALENTINE**

Win her with gifts if she respect not words;  
Dumb jewels often in their silent kind  
More than quick words do move a woman's mind.

**DUKE**

But she did scorn a present that I sent her.

**VALENTINE**

A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her.  
Send her another; never give her o'er,  
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.  
If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,  
But rather to beget more love in you.  
Take no repulse, whatever she doth say;  
For "get you gone" she doth not mean "away."

**DUKE**

But she I mean is promised by her friends  
Unto a youthful gentleman of worth  
And kept severely from resort of men,  
That no man hath access by day to her.

**VALENTINE**

Why, then, I would resort to her by night.

**DUKE**

Ay, but the doors be locked and keys kept safe,  
That no man hath recourse to her by night.

**VALENTINE**

May one may enter at her window?

**DUKE**

Her chamber is aloft, far from the ground,  
And built so shelving that one cannot climb it  
Without apparent hazard of his life.

**VALENTINE**

Why, then a ladder quaintly made of cords  
To cast up, with a pair of anchoring hooks,  
Would serve to scale another Hero's tower,  
So bold Leander would adventure it.

**DUKE**

Now, as thou art a gentleman of blood,  
Advise me where I may have such a ladder.

**VALENTINE**

When would you use it? Pray sir, tell me that.

**DUKE**

This very night; for love is like a child  
That longs for everything that he can come by.

**VALENTINE**

By seven o'clock I'll get you such a ladder.

**DUKE**

But hark thee: I will go to her alone;  
How shall I best convey the ladder thither?

**VALENTINE**

It will be light, my lord, that you may bear it  
Under a cloak that is of any length.

**DUKE**

A cloak as long as thine will serve the turn?

**VALENTINE**

Ay, my good lord.

**DUKE**

Then let me see thy cloak;  
I'll get me one of such another length.

**VALENTINE**

Why, any cloak will serve the turn, my lord.

**DUKE**

How shall I fashion me to wear a cloak?  
I pray thee, let me feel thy cloak upon me.

(Pulling off the cloak, he reveals a rope ladder and a paper.)

What letter is this same? What's here? (He reads.)

"To Sylvia."

I'll be so bold to break the seal for once.

(Reads.)

My thoughts do harbor with my Sylvia nightly,  
And slaves they are to me that send them flying.  
O, could their master come and go as lightly,  
Himself would lodge where, senseless, they are lying.  
My herald thoughts in thy pure bosom rest them,  
While I, their king, that thither them importune,  
Do curse the grace that with such grace hath blest them,  
Because myself do want my servants' fortune.  
I curse myself, for they are sent by me,  
That they should harbor where their lord should be.

And what's here?

(Reads.)

"Sylvia, this night I will enfranchise thee."

'Tis so. And here's the ladder for the purpose.  
Why, Phaëton—for thou art Merops' son—  
Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car  
And with thy daring folly burn the world?  
Wilt thou reach stars because they shine on thee?  
Go, base intruder, overweening slave,  
Bestow thy fawning smiles on equal mates  
And think my patience, more than thy desert,  
Is privilege for thy departure hence.  
Thank me for this more than for all the favors  
Which all too much I have bestowed on thee.  
But if thou linger in my territories  
Longer than swiftest expedition  
Will give thee time to leave our royal court,  
By heaven, my wrath shall far exceed the love  
I ever bore my daughter or thyself.  
Begone. I will not hear thy vain excuse,  
But, as thou lov'st thy life, make speed from hence.

(He exits)

## **VALENTINE**

And why not death, rather than living torment?  
To die is to be banished from myself,  
And Sylvia is myself; banished from her  
Is self from self—a deadly banishment.

What light is light if Sylvia be not seen?  
What joy is joy if Sylvia be not by—  
Unless it be to think that she is by  
And feed upon the shadow of perfection?  
Except I be by Sylvia in the night,  
There is no music in the nightingale.  
Unless I look on Sylvia in the day,  
There is no day for me to look upon.  
She is my essence, and I leave to be  
If I be not by her fair influence  
Fostered, illumined, cherished, kept alive.  
I fly not death, to fly his deadly doom; T  
arry I here, I but attend on death,  
But fly I hence, I fly away from life.