

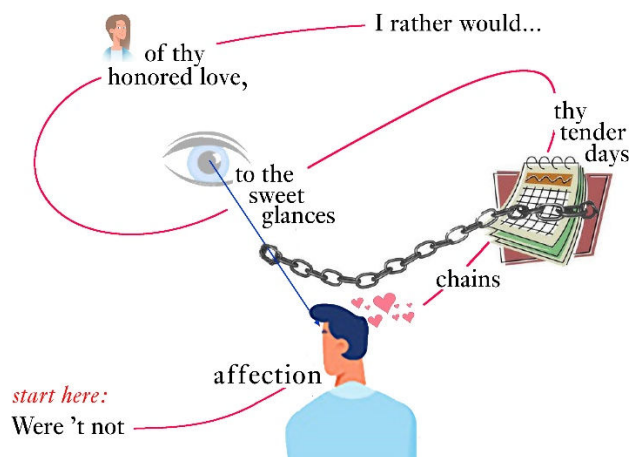
Rhetoric and Decorum

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act I sc. 1, lines 1–69

Valentine is departing for Milan. His best friend Proteus won't to join him because he's in love with Julia. Valentine despises romantic love, but is content for Proteus to stay in Verona.

Assignment Questions:

lines 3–6: *were 't not affection*. Multiple metaphors mixed together:



Here's how Valentine's sentence seems to work. Start with your affection, the feeling of love. Hand it a chain, in order that it can shackle the tender days of your youth, thereby keeping those days imprisoned. Now connect the other end to sweet glances cast by the eye. Not just any glances, but those of your honored love. What is the result? • Translate into plain English what Valentine appears to intend.

line 14: your happiness is my happiness; the first hint at the 16th-c. ideal of friendship

lines 17–27 don't seem to communicate anything meaningful; what is the function of the words in bold type?

line 29: • is there a difference between: *where scorn is bought with groans*, and *where groans will buy nothing but scorn*?

line 33: *a grievous labor won*. • What is there to win about a grievous labor, especially if you've just lost in love?

Val. Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus.
Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.
Were 't not **affection chains thy tender days**
To the sweet glances of thy honored love,
5 I rather would entreat thy company
To see the wonders of the world abroad
Than, living dully sluggardized at home,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.
But since thou lov'st, love still and thrive therein,
10 Even as I would when I to love begin.

Prot. Wilt thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu.
Think on thy Proteus when thou haply seest
Some rare noteworthy object in thy travel.
Wish me **partaker in thy happiness**
15 When thou dost meet good hap; and in thy danger,
If ever danger do environ thee,
Commend thy grievance to my holy **prayers**,
For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine.

Val. And on a love-**book pray** for my success?

20 Prot. Upon some **book** I love I'll pray for thee.

Val. That's on some shallow **story** of **deep** love,
How young Leander crossed the Hellespont.

Prot. That's a **deep story** of a deeper love,
For he was more than **over shoes in love**.

25 Val. 'Tis true, for you are **over boots in love**,
And yet you never swam the Hellespont.

Prot. Over the **boots**? Nay, give me not the boots.

Val. No, I will not, for it **boots** thee not.

Prot. What?

Val. To be in love, where **scorn is bought with groans**,
30 Coy looks with heart-sore sighs, one fading moment's
mirth
With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights;
If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain;
If lost, why then a **grievous labor** won;
35 How ever, but a folly bought with wit,
Or else a wit by folly vanquishèd.

Prot. So, **by your circumstance**, you call me fool.

Val. So, **by your circumstance**, I fear you'll prove.

Prot. 'Tis love you cavil at; I am not **Love**.

Val. **Love** is your master, for he masters you;

40 And he that is so yokèd by a fool
Methinks should not be chronicled for wise.

Prot. Yet writers say: as in the sweetest **bud**
The **eating canker** dwells, **so** eating **love**
Inhabits in the finest **wits** of all.

45 *Val.* And writers say: as the most forward **bud**
Is **eaten** by the **canker** ere it blow,
Even **so** by **love** the young and tender **wit**
Is turned to folly, blasting in the **bud**,
Losing his **verdure**, even in the **prime**,
50 And all the fair effects of future hopes.
But **wherefore waste I time to counsel thee**
That art a votary to fond desire?
Once more adieu. My father at the road
Expects my coming, there to see me shipped.

55 *Prot.* And thither will I bring thee, Valentine.

Val. Sweet Proteus, no. Now let us take our leave.
To Milan let me hear from thee by letters
Of thy success in love, and what news else
Betideth here in absence of thy friend.

60 And I likewise will visit thee with mine.

Prot. All happiness bechance to thee in Milan.

Val. As much to you at home. And so farewell. *He exits.*

Prot. He after honor hunts, I after love.

65 He leaves his friends, to dignify them more;
I leave myself, my friends, and all, for love.
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me,
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,
War with good counsel, set the world at nought;
Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought.

lines 42–44: *the eating canker* • A canker or blast is a bacterial disease that infects buds, and can cause a tree to lose the infected branch. It serves here as a metaphor for what?

lines 45–49: Valentine keeps the botanical imagery going (blasting, bud, verdure, prime). • To make what point, exactly?

line 57: is there a difference between:
to Milan send me letters, and
to Milan let me hear from you ?