SCENE I. Milan. An abbey.

[Enter EGLAMOUR]

Eglamour. The sun begins to gild the western sky;  
   And now it is about the very hour  
   That Silvia, at Friar Patrick's cell, should meet me.  
   She will not fail, for lovers break not hours,  
   Unless it be to come before their time;  
   So much they spur their expedition.  
   See where she comes.  
[Enter SILVIA]  
   Lady, a happy evening!

Silvia. Amen, amen! Go on, good Eglamour,  
   Out at the postern by the abbey-wall:  
   I fear I am attended by some spies.

Eglamour. Fear not; the forest is not three leagues off;  
   If we recover that, we are sure enough.  
[Exeunt]

SCENE II. The same. The DUKE's palace.

[Enter THURIO, PROTEUS, and JULIA]

Thurio. Sir Proteus, what says Silvia to my suit?

Proteus. O, sir, I find her milder than she was;  
   And yet she takes exceptions at your person.

Thurio. What, that my leg is too long?

Proteus. No; that it is too little.

Thurio. I'll wear a boot, to make it somewhat rounder.

Julia. [Aside] But love will not be spurr'd to what it loathes.
Thurio. What says she to my face?

Proteus. She says it is a fair one.

Thurio. Nay then, the wanton lies; my face is black.

Proteus. But pearls are fair; and the old saying is,
   Black men are pearls in beauteous ladies' eyes.

Julia. [Aside] 'Tis true; such pearls as put out
   ladies' eyes;
   For I had rather wink than look on them.

Thurio. How likes she my discourse?

Proteus. Ill, when you talk of war.

Thurio. But well, when I discourse of love and peace?

Julia. [Aside] But better, indeed, when you hold your peace.

Thurio. What says she to my valour?

Proteus. O, sir, she makes no doubt of that.

Julia. [Aside] She needs not, when she knows it cowardice.

Thurio. What says she to my birth?

Proteus. That you are well derived.

Julia. [Aside] True; from a gentleman to a fool.

Thurio. Considers she my possessions?

Proteus. O, ay; and pities them.

Thurio. Wherefore?

Julia. [Aside] That such an ass should owe them.

Proteus. That they are out by lease.

Julia. Here comes the duke.

[Enter DUKE]

Duke. How now, Sir Proteus! how now, Thurio!
   Which of you saw Sir Eglamour of late?
Thurio. Not I.

Proteus. Nor I.

Duke. Saw you my daughter?

Proteus. Neither.

Duke. Why then,  
   She's fled unto that peasant Valentine;  
   And Eglamour is in her company.  
   'Tis true; for Friar Laurence met them both,  
   As he in penance wander'd through the forest;  
   Him he knew well, and guess'd that it was she,  
   But, being mask'd, he was not sure of it;  
   Besides, she did intend confession  
   At Patrick's cell this even; and there she was not;  
   These likelihoods confirm her flight from hence.  
   Therefore, I pray you, stand not to discourse,  
   But mount you presently and meet with me  
   Upon the rising of the mountain-foot  
   That leads towards Mantua, whither they are fled:  
   Dispatch, sweet gentlemen, and follow me.  
   [Exit]

Thurio. Why, this it is to be a peevish girl,  
   That flies her fortune when it follows her.  
   I'll after, more to be revenged on Eglamour  
   Than for the love of reckless Silvia.  
   [Exit]

Proteus. And I will follow, more for Silvia's love  
   Than hate of Eglamour that goes with her.  
   [Exit]

Julia. And I will follow, more to cross that love  
   Than hate for Silvia that is gone for love.  
   [Exit]

SCENE III. The frontiers of Mantua. The forest.

[Enter Outlaws with SILVIA]

First Outlaw. Come, come,  
   Be patient; we must bring you to our captain.

Silvia. A thousand more mischances than this one  
   Have learn'd me how to brook this patiently.
Second Outlaw. Come, bring her away.

First Outlaw. Where is the gentleman that was with her?

Third Outlaw. Being nimble-footed, he hath outrun us,
        But Moyses and Valerius follow him.
        Go thou with her to the west end of the wood;
        There is our captain: we'll follow him that's fled;
        The thicket is beset; he cannot 'scape.

First Outlaw. Come, I must bring you to our captain's cave:
        Fear not; he bears an honourable mind,
        And will not use a woman lawlessly.

Silvia. O Valentine, this I endure for thee!
 [Exeunt]

SCENE IV. Another part of the forest.

[Enter VALENTINE]

Valentine. How use doth breed a habit in a man!
        This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
        I better brook than flourishing peopled towns:
        Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
        And to the nightingale's complaining notes
        Tune my distresses and record my woes.
        O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,
        Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,
        Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall
        And leave no memory of what it was!
        Repair me with thy presence, Silvia;
Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain!
What halloing and what stir is this to-day?
These are my mates, that make their wills their law,
Have some unhappy passenger in chase.
They love me well; yet I have much to do
To keep them from uncivil outrages.
Withdraw thee, Valentine: who's this comes here?

[Enter PROTEUS, SILVIA, and JULIA]

Proteus. Madam, this service I have done for you,
        Though you respect not aught your servant doth,
        To hazard life and rescue you from him
        That would have forced your honour and your love;
        Vouchsafe me, for my meed, 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.

Silvia. O miserable, unhappy that I am!

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

Silvia. By thy approach thou makest me most unhappy.

Julia. [Aside] And me, when he approacheth to your presence.

Silvia. Had I been seized 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 be gone; 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!

Silvia. 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, unless thou'dst two;
   And that's far worse than none; better have none
   Than plural faith which is too much by one:
   Thou counterfeit to thy true friend!

Proteus. In love
   Who respects friend?

Silvia. 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,
   And love you 'gainst the nature of love,--force ye.

Silvia. O heaven!

Proteus. I'll force thee yield to my desire.
Valentine. Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch,
    Thou friend of an ill fashion!

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 wouldest disprove me.
    Who should be trusted, when one's own 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 accurst,
    'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst!

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

Valentine. Then I am paid;
    And once again I do receive thee honest.
    Who by repentance is not satisfied
    Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased.
    By penitence the Eternal's wrath's appeased:
    And, that my love may appear plain and free,
    All that was mine in Silvia I give thee.

Julia. O me unhappy!
    [Swoons]

Proteus. Look to the boy.

Valentine. Why, boy! why, wag! how now! what's the matter?
    Look up; speak.

Julia. O good sir, my master charged me to deliver a ring
    to Madam Silvia, which, out of my neglect, was never done.

Proteus. Where is that ring, boy?

Julia. Here 'tis; this is it.

Proteus. How! let me see:
    Why, this is the ring I gave to Julia.

Julia. O, cry you mercy, sir, I have mistook:
    This is the ring you sent to Silvia.
Two Gentlemen of Verona

Proteus. But how camest thou by this ring? At my depart
I gave this unto Julia.

Julia. And Julia herself did give it me;
And Julia herself hath brought it hither.

Proteus. How! Julia!

Julia. Behold her that gave aim to all thy oaths,
And entertain'd 'em deeply in her heart.
How oft hast thou with perjury cleft the root!
O Proteus, let this habit make thee blush!
Be thou ashamed that I have took upon me
Such an immodest raiment, if shame live
In a disguise of love:
It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,
Women to change their shapes than men their minds.

Proteus. Than men their minds! 'tis true.
O heaven! were man
But constant, he were perfect. That one error
Fills him with faults; makes him run through all the sins:
Inconstancy falls off ere it begins.
What is in Silvia's face, but I may spy
More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye?

Valentine. Come, come, a hand from either:
Let me be blest to make this happy close;
'Twere pity two such friends should be long foes.

Proteus. Bear witness, Heaven, I have my wish for ever.

Julia. And I mine.

[Enter Outlaws, with DUKE and THURIO]

Outlaws. A prize, a prize, a prize!

Valentine. Forbear, forbear, I say! it is my lord the duke.
Your grace is welcome to a man disgraced,
Banished Valentine.

Duke. Sir Valentine!

Thurio. Yonder is Silvia; and Silvia's mine.

Valentine. Thurio, give back, or else embrace thy death;
Come not within the measure of my wrath;
Do not name Silvia thine; if once again,
Verona shall not hold thee. Here she stands;
Take but possession of her with a touch:
I dare thee but to breathe upon my love.

Thurio. Sir Valentine, I care not for her, I;
I hold him but a fool that will endanger
His body for a girl that loves him not:
I claim her not, and therefore she is thine.

Duke. The more degenerate and base art thou,
To make such means for her as thou hast done
And leave her on such slight conditions.
Now, by the honour of my ancestry,
I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine,
And think thee worthy of an empress' love:
Know then, I here forget all former griefs,
Cancel all grudge, repeal thee home again,
Plead a new state in thy unrivall'd merit,
To which I thus subscribe: Sir Valentine,
Thou art a gentleman and well derived;
Take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserved her.

Valentine. I thank your grace; the gift hath made me happy.
I now beseech you, for your daughter's sake,
To grant one boon that I shall ask of you.

Duke. I grant it, for thine own, whate'er it be.

Valentine. These banish'd men that I have kept withal
Are men endued with worthy qualities:
Forgive them what they have committed here
And let them be recall'd from their exile:
They are reformed, civil, full of good
And fit for great employment, worthy lord.

Duke. Thou hast prevail'd; I pardon them and thee:
Dispose of them as thou know'st their deserts.
Come, let us go: we will include all jars
With triumphs, mirth and rare solemnity.

Valentine. And, as we walk along, I dare be bold
With our discourse to make your grace to smile.
What think you of this page, my lord?

Duke. I think the boy hath grace in him; he blushes.

Valentine. I warrant you, my lord, more grace than boy.

Duke. What mean you by that saying?

Valentine. Please you, I'll tell you as we pass along,
That you will wonder what hath fortuned.
Come, Proteus; 'tis your penance but to hear
The story of your loves discovered:
That done, our day of marriage shall be yours;
One feast, one house, one mutual happiness.

[Exeunt]