

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

by William Shakespeare

Act 3, sc. 1 (line 141 - Verse)

Duke

What letter is this same? What's here? 'To Silvia'!

And here an engine fit for my proceeding.

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

Reads

'My thoughts do harbour with my Silvia 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 hither them importune,

Do curse the grace that with such grace hath bless'd them,

Because myself do want my servants' fortune:

I curse myself, for they are sent by me,

That they should harbour where their lord would be.'

What's here?

'Silvia, this night I will enfranchise thee.'

'Tis so; and here's the ladder for the purpose.

Why, Phaeton,--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 favours
Which all too much I have bestow'd 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.
Be gone! I will not hear thy vain excuse;
But, as thou lovest thy life, make speed from hence.