



Arts Engagement
and Education

LAUNCE

“I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured”

From *Two Gentlemen of Verona*

by William Shakespeare: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk>

Gender: Male/Male Presenting

Style: Classical Comedic

Age Range: Teen-Young Adult

Link to buy Script: www.amazon.com

Play Synopsis

Proteus and Valentine are best friends who are parting ways in the beginning of the story. Valentine travels to Milan, where he falls in love with Silvia, daughter of the Duke. Proteus, meanwhile, remains in Verona, where he has pledged to faithfulness to his beloved Julia.

When Proteus travels to Milan, however, he too falls in love with Silvia and proceeds to undermine his friend by denouncing him to the Duke. Valentine is banished to the forest, where he joins a band of thieves. Proteus pursues Silvia more and more fervently, even to the point of threatening to take her violently. Julia arrives in Milan disguised as a page and joins herself to the unsuspecting Proteus, and the two of them "rescue" Silvia from the thieves to whom she had fled. At the moment when Proteus is about to attack Silvia, Valentine intercedes to save her.

Astonishingly, Valentine is so overcome by his friend's anguish that he is even prepared to yield Silvia to Proteus. Julia swoons, and the page's true identity is revealed. Proteus now sees her as his true love, and the Duke arrives on stage to offer his daughter's hand to Valentine.

Before this moment

Lance (Proteus's servant) and Crab (Lance's dog) are headed to Proteus's departing ship. Lance makes a big speech to the audience about how he must accompany Proteus to the "Emperor's" court in Milan. Lance's entire family is upset that Lance is leaving. His mom's "weeping," his dad's "wailing," his sister's "crying," the maid's "howling," etc. The only member of the family that couldn't care less is Lance's beloved dog, Crab.

To demonstrate his dog's indifference, Lance takes off his shoes and then proceeds to use his footwear, a walking stick and a hat as props to reenact what went down at his family home when he broke the sad news of his imminent departure.

Monologue (Act II, Scene III)

I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured
dog that lives: my mother weeping, my father
wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat
wringing her hands, and all our house in a great
perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed

one tear: he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog: a Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father: no, this left shoe is my father: no, no, this left shoe is my mother: nay, that cannot be so neither: yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worser sole. This shoe, with the hole in it, is my mother, and this my father; a vengeance on't! there 'tis: now, sit, this staff is my sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand: this hat is Nan, our maid: I am the dog: no, the dog is himself, and I am the dog—Oh! the dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so, so. Now come I to my father; Father, your blessing: now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping: now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now come I to my mother: O, that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her; why, there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

Helpful Links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bByB2lecGAg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flpvlYV1QCo>